The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE CLERGY AND POLITICS

FATHER COUGHLIN'S reply to the attack of General Hugh Johnson is not the end but merely part of the beginning of the controversy—or, rather, the several controversies—brought to an acute point by General Johnson's volcanic irruption. Of course, General Johnson will reply. He has added the pen—or, rather, the typewriter—to his weapons. He is entering the ranks of the syndicated newspaper columnists. He can write as pungently as he talks. The editors of the papers who will publish his articles may at times be made anxious as to whether or not they are being led into the dangerous and expensive mazes of the libel laws; but they probably will not have cause to dread the worst danger that menaces all papers which publish the syndicated articles of the columnists, namely, the deadly danger of dullness which afflicts so many papers depending on standardized "features," and which drives so many of their readers away.

General Johnson has promised the public not to "pull his punches." No doubt he will keep his promise. He is a hard-hitter. He knows how to choose his dynamitic words and how to shape phrases that explode like bombs; except that many have more sound than sense, while others are only duds. But—to revert to the General's own fighting language—does he know how to land his blows? A great many of his verbal punches and swings and upper-cuts and "hay-makers," if these be the correct expressions to describe his pugilistic proclivities, are merely wasted on the empty air; they do not reach his opponent. They may delight the uncritical mass of his supporters, and certainly they prove his abounding vitality and pugnacity; but also they leave the General wide open to the come-back of his opponents. Here, again, his vitality and resourcefulness may save him from a knock-out; but, very decidedly, it seems to us, in the case of

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the first round of his battle with Father Coughlin, most of the points of their debate (if so smashing and crashing an exchange may be called by so mild a word) have been won by the priest, not by the cavalryman.

It seems strange to the point of fantastic recklessness that General Johnson should have taken the personal responsibility of telling the public that he questioned Father Coughlin's citizenship, and that he classed the priest with Judas Iscariot because he had broken a vow of poverty, assumed as a member of a religious order, by buying and selling silver, without having investigated these matters to determine the facts. Almost equally out of line with facts was his bracketing of Father Coughlin with Talleyrand — the aristocratic bishop who put money and personal power above all other objects, and who was excommunicated by the Church because of, among other reasons, his notorious financial chicanery. Father Coughlin, in his reply, had an easy task in convicting his opponent of ignorance and recklessness on all these matters.

Since the main intention of General Johnson's speech was to arouse the opposition of the American public to the dangers of demagogy—one of which is reckless, unfounded charges against the opponents of demagogy—that intention must remain unfilled so long as it is the man accused by him of being a demagog who is left in the position of correcting the gross errors of fact, and the groundless insinuations, of the spokesman of conservatism.

But on the deeper and far more important issue raised by General Johnson, namely, whether or no a clergyman has a right, or even a duty, in a free democratic country, to take part in political affairs, the General stood on safer ground. It is safer because, so far, the question cannot be decided by the application of specific facts; and, therefore, it is a matter of opinion, not of determined principles, or rules, or laws. So far as the laws and traditions of the United States are concerned, they all support and encourage the participation of clergymen in public affairs. The history of this country is interwoven from the beginning with the records of clerical activities in public affairs. The separation of Church and State has never been, nor can it ever be, a separation of the whole body of the clergy of all denominations from their rights and duties as free men, and citizens, of a country of free institutions—unless, or until, the supremacy of the purely secular State is established in some form of Socialism or Fascism: which God forbid, and which all free Americans will fight together to prevent, in spite of all doctrinal differences in religion.

In fact, the effort to banish clergymen from active participation in politics—we do not mean party politics, or merely partizan politics, which degrade the clergy, but that order of politics which is intended to better the conditions of society, the striving for the general good—this effort is at bottom part and parcel of the modern spirit of materialistic secularism, which is striving mightily to destroy not merely the public influence of the clergy, but also to destroy and utterly obliterate all human attachment to religion itself, and the things which stem only from religion: moral laws, ethical principles, the integrity of human personality, and the responsibility of individuals for the good of others as well as their own private interests.

Father Coughlin may or may not be wrong in this or that particular utterance, or action, or plan; but it seems to us that he is basically right in defending not merely his own prerogatives as a free man and a responsible citizen of a free country, but that also he is defending the cause of religion itself, as well as the cause of democracy, by his stand against General Johnson's attack.

What politics, and social life in general—and in especial, our economic system—needs, for the good of the nation, is more religion, applied in practise, not merely preached in platitudes. The man, or the clergyman, who dares to take such action may, and often will, go wrong in details; if so, he can be corrected, and checked, or defeated, in the natural course of free political and social action. He follows, to be sure, a dangerous road. But if he mistakes mere caution, or sloth, or indifference, or class interests, for the holy virtue of prudence, his road is worse than dangerous: it is the way of death for religion.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

WASHINGTON continued to demonstrate that the administration's break with Left-wing groups was more than a tentative feeler. The oratorical fracas engaged in by Father Coughlin, Senator Long and General Johnson looked like a minor national political campaign, and not a few were surmising that it might expand into the real thing by 1936. What matters in all this, be it said again, is not a principle or a theory of economics, but a tide of acrid emotion which, accumulating primarily in groups of people which were once those of small property owners, has lately taken on a definitely nationalistic tinge. One can by no means feel sure that Mr. Roosevelt, whose advisers have leaned for the most part toward what may be termed a social-democratic philosophy, will eventually have the best of the argument. For this conflict is almost bound to become momentous and uncompromising. Much depends on whether

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the administration can retain the good-will of the farming population, which thus far has benefited greatly by rising prices. The announcement that the President will seek to raise the price level and "readjust the debt structure" therefore has considerable significance. Organized labor is relatively committed to the Roosevelt camp. It may denounce certain weaknesses in NRA, it may seek outside help in its effort to secure a legalized thirty-hour week. But in the end—unless all signs fail—it will decide that the Long-Coughlin doctrine offers little assurance to labor. Radical monetary unsettlement, with wide swings upward in prices and a tardy adjustment in wages to the scale of living costs, is almost everything that judicious labor sentiment will wish to avoid. Far less obvious is any symptom of genuine reconcilement between industry and the President. Indeed there are good reasons for believing that at least a number of dominant moneyed interests may regard him as the greater of two evils. Careful social engineering is so much more tedious and trying than devaluation that a try at an inflationary boom might be very welcome in many quarters.

POLITICAL barometer readings for Europe were somewhat anxiously consulted during the past week. Hitler's diplomatic "cold," which postponed the conferences with Sir John Simon, was not altogether beyond accounting for. So blunt and unequivocal was the document on which the British government based its appeal to Parliament for more armament money that a German "leader" whose mission is to export doves of peace from a recruiting ground could hardly refrain from feeling a trifle hurt. Why waste time making speeches, he may have felt, if this is reward? Nevertheless Sir John will eventually reach Berlin, and some compromise or other will be effected. This will deceive nobody. It may well be, however, a political crisis will be slow to develop in western Europe. Whether France and Great Britain will care to take a hand in what is, however, slowly but surely developing in the countries east of Germany remains to be seen. There is no government in that region which is secure against rebellion at home, not to mention pressure from abroad. Greece is just an instance of what must be expected, unless all signs fail, in many nations. The current uprising is a bloody and elemental struggle for control of the military power. Regardless of the immediate military interests, the eventual outcome will be a form of soldier dictatorship. The liquidation of democracy proceeds apace. Many are wondering if the only thing that liquidation means is the art of suppression, as currently practised. It is too early to decide.

Send for Sherman

CONCERNING the homicide rate in this country much has been written and little done. It is easy to calculate that three men are slain every two days in New York City alone, while in the whole of Great Britain five are murdered every week. But what accounts for the difference? There are numerous theories, virtually every one of which can be proved wrong. Some years ago, many people blamed it on the immigrant population, doubtless surmising that every slayer was the son of a Sicilian brigand. Statistics have sternly removed that view to the boneyard. It was then asserted that the courts were not adequately severe—a reflection which is outlawed by the fact that the rate of capital punishment for convicted murderers is higher in various parts of the United States than it is abroad. It has been asserted that guns and ammunition are easier to obtain here, and there is doubtless something in the theory. But in Bavaria, where hunting was a prevalent habit and guns abundant, the homicide rate was very low until recently. Nor are we, in all probability, a less religious people than others, though to be sure deep religious conviction serves everywhere as a curb during moments of anger. Perhaps the most satisfactory explanation yet advanced is the comparative individualism of the American. He develops a tendency to take the law into his own hands, and to repudiate law which seems remote from or unallied to him. The very rudiments of socialization are difficult to implant here. Groups will go far toward identifying government with their pet views, and toward expecting all things from government. But when it comes to fitting one's life into a pattern already existing—well, that is a different matter. Homicide statistics may after all be only a gruesome clue to the existing system of chaotic social ethics.

Murder— a National Pastime?

THE IMPENDING canonization of Sir Thomas More means a new and particularly ingratiating patron for lawyers, gentlemen and writers. Of the first two we shall say little here; for there can be little doubt that many a barrister will find delightful edification in looking up a saint's judgment on legal matters, and in studying his conception of justice itself. That a greater gentleman—in the correct sense of the term—never lived has long been a commonplace, and Sir Thomas's deportment on the way to execution was all the best authorities on manners indicate, and vastly more. But we think that the case for the writer has not yet been adequately made. Professor Campbell's masterly edition of the "English Writings" created precious little stir here, and to tell the

Another Literary Patron

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truth it is hard to see why it should have done so. Who reads even Erasmus or Petrarch nowadays? And so it is likely enough that Sir Thomas will remain, even after his canonization, the author of "Utopia." Let us remember that not every good scribe is aiming at the ears of posterity. It is a mistake to suppose that Ben Jonson's masques, for example, were not very great art, though they possessed no objective beyond the pleasure of merry Elizabethan crowds. The expository or argumentative writer is even more likely to fall with his own generation. More, for his part, was surprisingly a devotee of his own age. His earliest success was gained on the lecture platform—so, in a sense, was his last. He did not despise controversy, demanding only that it be urbane. Once, when he threatened to abandon law for literature, his father came near cutting him off with a shilling! Many scribes will wish that their progenitors had done likewise. But it will console them to realize that one of their fraternity may live as a saint in men's minds long after he has ceased to matter very greatly as an author.

Reflections on Revolution

WHY IS it that so many intelligent people do not recognize that we are in the midst of a social revolution? Is it because, in America, the word revolution is so closely associated with actual physical violence? Our historic memories of the Revolutionary War against the English oligarchy and the impressions made on the national consciousness by the bloody French Revolution, and by the horrible and more recent Russian and other European revolutions, perhaps prevent us from understanding that profound, sudden changes in social systems may occur—and are occurring today—unaccompanied with any great degree of physical violence. We should remember what happened in Italy through Mussolini, in Germany through Hitler; where, in both countries, the most drastic alterations of the social fabric have been made without much physical disturbance or bloodshed. Barricades in the streets are not the necessary accompaniments of revolution—10,000,000 to 15,000,000 idle men loafing in the streets for five years while the rest of the population labors to keep them from despair and starvation is a much stronger proof of a revolutionary condition. For these men and their wives and children are the victims not of mere accident, still less of their own folly or misbehavior, but of an utterly inadequate social system issuing from a false, or inadequate, philosophy—a philosophy which is not merely neutral as regards the claims of Christianity, but is innately anti-Christian because it is grounded upon first principles which deny and repudiate and in effect strive against the first principles of Christian philosophy and Christian sociology. For it is the system commonly called *laissez-faire,* economic liberalism, free, unfettered commercialism and finance, capitalism unbounded by any law of spiritual or moral responsibility for the dignity and personality of man, which brought about our present condition. Strange and unholy paradox is this—that a system that prided itself on being the practical philosophy of rugged individuals should now cast into ruin so many individuals whose chief desire is to be afforded an opportunity to employ their personal powers or talents in liberty and self-support! A decent society must find, at any cost, room somewhere for every personality; and there will be no peace until the hour of that society dawns.

Queer Companions

A RECENT column in the New York *Times* from the pen of Mr. Walter Duranty opens the door, briefly but suggestively, upon the Soviet school system and its problems. Several facts, some of which we have touched upon individually before, emerge from Mr. Duranty's account of the acknowledged shortcomings of the present educational régime in Russia. The one most immediately disturbing, to Soviet parents and party leaders alike—the increasing wildness of school children, the growth of what is officially denominated as "juvenile hooliganism," due allegedly to the lack of manners and discipline in the schools and to the fact that youngsters "run wild" in their own free time—suggests a situation similar to the one complained about in our own crowded urban centers. Only, of course, there is this difference, that we have always realized, even if we have allowed ourselves to be merely passive about it, that the loosened domestic authority, which is the first cause of the situation, is a disaster; whereas the Russians seemingly do not, and perhaps from their premises cannot. But other aspects of the matter are equally interesting. Two years ago, we are reminded, the practise of group study and collective graduation was abolished in favor of that old bourgeois expedient, individual grading; and at the same time, party zeal and party activities were repudiated as a substitute for scholarly effort. Now, in line with the same development, emphasis is being deliberately directed away from pure Marxism and materialism in the educational method and content. The non-collectivist conception of an economically disinterested culture, a culture without a "class angle," has thus evidently been asserting itself. It is a little weird to think of this major heresy of the bourgeois dispensation actually being welcomed into the proletarian citadel. Surely either it will not remain—or the citadel will not remain.

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WHAT IS MONEY WORTH?

By GERHARD HIRSCHFELD

The problem of money occupies the foreground of American economic discussion. It is difficult for the reason (among others) that conceptions of credit and banking have changed radically during the modern industrial period. Mr. Hirschfeld argues that the relationship between the cost of money and economic activity is now distorted, and that the function of interest must be worked out more clearly by banking authorities. The present situation, at any rate, is one of insecurity.—The Editors.

SOMETIMES it is doubted—and not only by Socialists—that money is a value. However, it would seem that one of the surest proofs that it is a value is the fact that money has and always has had its price: we call it "interest." It is supposed to be an intricate topic and, no doubt, much has been written about it, although fundamentally it may be a very simple thing: if you use money constructively, it earns a profit. This need not mean that money will or should always carry interest. But it does indicate that in order to apply money to constructive tasks, it has to be hooked up with labor, with planning, with operating, with production or service or consumption; in short, it has to be linked with some sort of activity in order to become itself an activity. If so, it earns a profit.

Of this simple principle which may be checked in any book of economic history, we have made a mess, to speak of current conditions. Money lies idle, yet it pays interest no matter how small. Money is subjected to heavy losses, depreciation, deterioration, be that in factories or machinery, in ships, railroads, outdoor advertising or gas stations, yet an honest company will see to it that the proper interest is paid on the investment. Banks are hard pressed under the scarcity of investment opportunities, yet they pay interest. Corporations may suffer losses, but they continue to pay the interest. Originally, there was an *if* to the principle of interest: *if* the money is used constructively. Nowadays, we follow a simpler procedure, we pay interest wherever there is money involved, be it for good or evil.

Thus, the principle of interest has become a farce, or a fancy. Interest used to be the *sine qua non* of profitable investment. In our times it has changed to a commodity. An up-to-date conversation between a person who has money to offer and another who seeks money may run like this:

A. "Here is money, plenty of it. Why don't you take it?"

B. "Oh, I don't know. I think the price is too steep."

A. "What, at 5 percent? Don't be silly. Now I tell you, as one good friend to another, I am going to give it to you for 4½ percent."

B. "Nothing doing. I can't afford to pay more than 3 percent."

A. "At 3 percent! Man, you don't know what you are talking about. Shall I tell you that it cost me 3½ percent to get it myself? Shall I say that it has been here on the shelf for three months and I can't find a customer? It has cost me already nearly 1 percent. Here is a last offer: 4 percent and not a penny less."

B. "Sorry, old boy. No business. Good-day."

How did we get that way? It is evident that interest would never have popped up even in ancient history if man had not found out that money is a value with which to create other values. So he put a price on it. And a price we have been paying on money ever since. What has changed, then? Our conception of money has undergone some profound alterations, and not for the better, either. Through the centuries, mankind has been busy in economic activity. People were absorbed in creating something, the artizan no less than the peasant. Money was just an accompanying feature, and a very much subordinated one at that. There was not much money around at first. Bartering took a more important place in the economic lives of the people than gold or silver or copper coins. They figured their wealth in activity, in production, in sales. The modern generation did away with such old-fashioned ways of doing business. It figured in credits; it measured currency in circulation, gold, investments and what not.

Money (and with it interest) has become a fixed part of our economy. It has become an institution. Where it formerly was, let us say, one-half of the Siamese twins, now it has become a freak individual by a very doubtful process of evolution. The link between money and economic activity has been broken; when and whether it will be restored, no one knows. Money, as well as interest, are now considered independent factors, not to say elements. Our entire monetary policy has in past months been derived from gold statistics. Many hundreds of opinions, from Father Coughlin down to my newspaperman around the corner, are based upon money, devaluation of money, increase of money, stimulation of circulation, restoration of gold, inclusion of silver, and so on. How could the present agi-

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tation for inflation of the currency grow to such popular proportions if it were not for the widespread belief in money as a value, regardless of the only thing that makes money—economic activity?

The utter discrepancy between the course of economic activity and interest payments may be shown in the following table:

	INCOME PRODUCED BY BUSINESS	INTEREST PAYMENTS
1929.....	$83,037,000,000	$5,687,000,000
1930.....	70,484,000,000	5,826,000,000
1932.....	38,349,000,000	5,506,000,000

Whereas between 1929 and 1932 income produced by business dropped more than 50 percent, whereas wages declined by about 40 and dividends by more than 46 percent, interest payments lost a little over 3 percent. So much for the "broken link" between economic activity on one side, and the price of money on the other side.

Now to the connection, if there is any, between economic activity and the use of money. Here are a few indices of economic activity during 1934, as compared with 1933:

	1934	1933
Steel ingot output (tons)	25,625,000	22,894,000
Gas industry (customers)	15,700,000	15,300,000
Motor vehicles, registered (cars)....	24,952,000	23,850,000
Capital goods, prod..	$5,800,000,000	$4,000,000,000
Telephones	300,000 (increase)	630,000 (decrease)
Heavy building contracts	$1,360,600,000	$1,068,400,000
New bond financing (New York)....	$1,470,000,000	$588,000,000
Electricity, sales (kwh)	70,730,000,000	65,700,000,000
Unemployment (Nov.)	10,094,000	10,480,000

With this improvement all around, according to old-fashioned principles there should be a corresponding pick-up in the use of money, but we find the following picture:

	END OF 1934	A YEAR AGO
Federal Reserve credit	$2,461,000,000	$2,688,000,000
Currency circulation	5,534,000,000	5,791,000,000
Brokerage loans (Fed. Res.) ...	652,000,000	709,000,000
Security loans (mbr. banks)..	3,072,000,000	3,628,000,000
Commercial loans (mbr. banks)..	4,581,000,000	4,774,000,000

Every item on the money side has gone down, notwithstanding that every item of economic activity, as far as shown above, has gone up.

Now it may be possible to produce the proper explanations for this phenomenal contrast, phenomenal at least to the mind of a layman. A trained economist may find it easy to prove by graphs, charts and statistics that the curves followed by economic activity and by the use of money should be just as they are. But it seems incomprehensible that we are using less money, in one form or the other, while we are more active in the pursuit of business. The only explanation I have to offer is that our monetary system is completely out of gear; that business is going one way, and our monetary policy another. While they should be marching and fighting shoulder by shoulder, the two behave like beggars on the same street corner who will not speak to each other. So much for the "broken link" between economic activity on one side, and the use of money on the other side.

Although it has been proposed to discuss in this article the rate of interest, it has been found necessary to devote some space to money for the simple reason that interest is the price of money. In order to establish its worth and justification, one has to look into the uses and the profitability of money. As a matter of fact, there has been little encouragement for either. Excess reserves of member banks of the Federal Reserve System, which are available as the basis for credit expansion, increased during the past year from less than $800,000,000 to far above $2,000,000,000. Net demand deposits of the reporting member banks increased about $3,360,000,000, including government deposits; the gain in deposits for all banks is estimated at a minimum of $5,000,000,000.

There is idle money, and hence unprofitable money. This may have affected the profits of bankers and the credit needs of manufacturers but this unprofitable money did not mean much, if anything, to the rate of interest that we continued to pay out. President Roosevelt only recently found it advisable to call attention to the continued high rate of interest that is being paid by the people and that ranges from 6 and 8 percent to three times as much per annum. Perhaps as an indirect result, the Federal Reserve Board reduced the maximum rate of interest which may be paid on time and savings deposits from 3 to 2½ percent, effective February 1, 1935. This goes for member banks of the system and for state banks and trust companies which are not members but are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Nearly 14,000 banks will be affected, or not quite 90 percent of all banks opened. To what extent this reduction will be reflected in the price the people are paying for money, remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, two facts seem to stand out: first, there is no connection (discernible to the naked

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eye) between economic activity and money in use; secondly, there is but small connection between available funds and the rate of interest, at least as far as the standard-bearers of economic activity are concerned, the merchants, the industrialists, the traders, the retailers, and so on. It is easy to say that this is all wrong; that the banking funds were so anxious to be employed that they were actually chasing after the merchants and the manufacturers. Yet, the truth of the matter is that presently at least $10,000,000,000 of unused credit is lying in the banks of the country. To be sure, loans are made on two conditions: security and profitability. Was it lack of security? Hardly. Of all manufacturers employing between 20 and 250 wage-earners, nearly one-half encountered credit difficulties; and of these, one-half again had current net worth to debt ratios of 2.0 or more. At least one-third of the firms suffering from credit refusal or restriction had $2 in current assets for every $1 of current liabilities. This was in 1933; in the meantime the position of the firms should have materially improved, but credits have not become easier. If it was not the security of the loan which blocked the transaction, it must have been the profitability, i. e., the price at which the money was available. Interest is to blame.

This is a remarkable situation. Originally, somewhere in the dark ages of our history, a price was tagged to the use of money because that use yielded profits. Today, thousands of producers are demanding billions of dollars with which to create values and profits, and cannot get it because the price is too high—a price which in the first place, mind you, was justified solely by the creation of values and of profits. This is what our modern conception of the use of money and the rate of interest has done for the champion of economic activity: the producer, the entrepreneur. Who, then, has been the blessed beneficiary of our monetary system?

The government! Here is the record: the volume of business done in United States Government bonds in the over-the-counter market last year amounted to about $72,000,000,000, a new record, and about two-and-one-half times the total government debt now outstanding; this compares with about $50,000,000,000 in 1933. The annual interest charges on the total government debt of $27,714,000,000 approximated in 1934 something like $820,463,000, as compared with $758,943,000 for 1933, an increase of 8 percent. But—and this is the important point—the average rate of interest on all United States Government obligations now outstanding has been reduced from 3.23 percent at the end of 1933 to 2.96 percent a year later, an annual saving of about $75,000,000. This is what the rate of interest has done for the government.

How did the bankers fare? In leading cities they have invested $446,000,000 in bonds fully guaranteed by the government during the past year. These holdings are in addition to the $6,650,000,000 of direct government securities held by these banks. This means that about 40 percent of the earning assets of these banks are invested in government rather than private loans and securities. Yields on longer terms have declined about 10 percent during the past year. The rates of income from other types of bonds have dropped from 10 to 30 percent or more, depending upon the type of bond, while rates charged customers on ordinary commercial loans have declined between 6 and 20 percent, depending upon the section of the country. Meanwhile, there has been no net expansion of earning assets except those taking the form of government obligations, and in the latter the enlargement has for the most part been in short-term issues the yield on which has in some cases actually disappeared. The mass of excess reserves has sharpened a competitive situation to a point where normal banking profits have been whittled away to the vanishing point. This is the contribution of our use of money and our handling of the rate of interest to the well-being of the banking fraternity.

The disadvantages of the present conception of interest are obvious; they are equivalent to a corporation declaring with but small variations dividends and earnings and surpluses year after year, regardless of the state of business. It cannot be done; yet, with money and interest it is being done, year after year. It has been shown above how in the first few depression years everything declined but interest payments. From the same tabulation it may be deducted that there would be a handsome saving in the distribution of our national income if the rates of interest would be as elastic as dividends and wages, not to mention the tremendous stimulation as well as facility given to any sort of business enterprise by a regulation of the "price of money."

There is no space left to discuss the requirements for the application of a more commonsense principle of interest to our economic system. But this much may be said: the principle of interest as such cannot be changed; it is, has been and will be the price of money. The use of money and the restriction of this use to constructive enterprise is the lever which moves the complex problem of interest. The first effort should therefore be directed to find once more the link between the system of money and that of economic activity. Money as an independent value must be stricken from our books and minds, and in its place must be reestablished the predominant principle of economic activity to which both, money and interest, are but subordinated factors.

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A BATTLEFIELD OF PRAYER

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE OTHER night it was my lot to experience what that vivid writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald, recently described so well in an essay in *Esquire:* the emotions, and the confused, febrile tumult of memories and thoughts which come to one who awakens between two and three o'clock in the morning and cannot sleep again. Mr. Fitzgerald, as a novelist, deals almost exclusively with the people, things and places of this world in their most mundane aspects. Every now and then, however, his pen pierces through the sensuous surface of things and opens up dark vistas into the life that is not of this world, but which occasionally manifests itself among us—sometimes in ghastly fashion. There is a passage in "This Side of Paradise," for example, in which the devil becomes incarnate, and mingles with those gay, young, ultra-modern people whose petting parties and frenetic futilities Mr. Fitzgerald won fame by first describing. It is true that this curious passage stems directly from a much profounder scene of the same sort in Dostoievsky's "Brothers Karamazov"; but the Fitzgerald demon is not a mere imitation of the Russian one. The American writer has evidently glimpsed the night world of the supernatural, and reports upon his own experience in his own way. Even in the *Esquire* essay, which is concerned mostly with the merely pathological impressions of a nervous (not to say neurotic) person, dealing with his mingled memories, and his jitters, in the dark hour (the low tide of the day's life) when he awakens and cannot sleep again, there is the atmosphere of the supernatural, surrounding and interpenetrating the morbidities of the "natural." How impossible, perhaps, it is definitely to separate the two conditions!

What happened to dominate my own experience—perhaps also to cause it by awakening me—was a sudden clamor of bells. There was a fire somewhere in the country town where I try to do my not very successful sleeping. And as the bells rang out, there flashed before my eyes in the darkness—and persisted after I had turned on a light—a picture I had seen in one of the newspapers that day; and there was, no doubt also suggested by the bells, a haunting recollection of some lines in Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra"—lines that are set like word-music to the imagined strokes of a clock gong sounding the nocturnal hours:

Twelve!
—I have waked from a deep sleep.
One!
—What speaks the deep midnight?
Two!
—O Man take heed!

The picture was of a group of Trappist monks, photographed in the cloister garden of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. They were carrying their dead Abbot, clothed in his pontifical robes, unconffined, to his grave among all the other monks who have died on that battlefield of prayer which is a Trappist monastery.

And I remembered how, years ago, when for a time I dwelt as a guest in that monastery, it would be at two o'clock that the harsh bell of the chapel would arouse me, and I would go to the dimly lighted chapel of the oldest abbey in America, and be a spectator while the white-robed monks—the choir priests and lay Brothers—sang Matins and Lauds, and engaged themselves in their peculiar part in that tremendous business of the Church's liturgy: the dealing of men with God through prayer in common. From one end of the earth to the other, that business ceaselessly proceeds. It has been proceeding for nearly two thousand years in the Church, and, of course, under the Old Law, for many centuries previously. And it will go on until time has been merged into eternity, and the matter of the earth has been transmuted into that unity with spirit which is the unimaginable consummation of all the processes of time and space and force and matter amid which now mankind is passing on its pilgrimage.

So I got up from my bed, as I used to do in the monastery; but as there is no chapel in my country town to which I may go so early in the day, I took up instead the tools of my trade, a pencil and a pad of paper, and I passed the hours of Matins and Lauds at work, since I could not pray. I could not pray as I wished to do in response to the black-bordered card received the day before from Gethsemani Abbey, requesting prayers for the soul of Abbot Obrecht. However, the Trappists stem from Saint Benedict, and I recalled, for my support in that lonely and terrible hour of the night—the hour, so they say, when our human energies are at their lowest, and when so many people, therefore, whose measure of time force is running down, pass out of time—I recalled, I repeat, for my poor consolation, the Benedictine motto, that work is, or can be, prayer. So perhaps my work, being all I could offer, might pass as prayer.

What a man was Abbot Obrecht! More than

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eighty years formed his portion of time on earth, and up until almost the end of it he was working as few men are able to work, and praying as still fewer even know how to pray—and for him indeed work and prayer were one thing. He was a warrior, too. Literally, he had been a solider, a cavalry officer, for France against the Prussian horde in 1870. In his cell at Gethsemani, on his desk, there was a statue of Our Lady of Peace in a sort of shrine, the supporting columns of which were two live shells brought back by the old soldier monk from some battlefield in France after the World War. To him there was nothing incongruous in that shrine. Entering religion soon after the Franco-Prussian war, since then he had fought for God and His Church with spiritual weapons for more than fifty years. And that is a sort of warfare far more strenuous, far more sustained, far more momentous, and far more perilous, than any other form of strife known to men in this world. But the old Abbot knew and never forgot that, while men still are men on this earth and subject to the changing phases of time, swords and guns and shells may be and sometimes are necessary and legitimate weapons. For, worse even than war, among the evils which afflict mankind, would be the false and unblessed security which men may gain by becoming slaves and yielding up their souls and wills to the tyranny of injustice for a mess of pottage and a promise of servile peace.

When I said to him, "Queer things to support Our Lady of Peace, Father Abbot—these shells," he replied, "We seek the peace the world cannot give, but meanwhile we must live in this world: and the Huns may break loose again. Let's be prepared."

But he could smile as readily as anybody else at the incongruity of the artillery shells—a joke akin to those which were carved or painted by the medieval cathedral artizans: jokes, yes, but with a sting in their tails; and we may safely use the word "tails," remembering how many of those ancient caricatures and cartoons were put into the shapes of demons.

Not for me, of course, is it fitting to attempt to penetrate the soul of the Abbot when he meditated in his cell, or in his stall in the chapel, but at least I may try to tell about what I saw of him, and thought about him, in his more public capacity: when he sat among his warriors of prayer, their Captain, in the chapel—the main battlefield of the unending war which not only the Trappists, but all our religious orders and congregations, men and women both, and the vaster army of our bishops and priests, carry on, *in saecula saeculorum*.

Clever writers or talkers, and many not so clever or able, criticize the Church from many "points of view," from many personal platforms. They talk or write about her failures in this sphere or the other, economic, or political, or social, or point out, often cogently enough, the failure of her human instruments. That is their right. It may even be their duty, if a true conscience urges them on. But when so many of them criticize or condemn the Church without so much as appearing even to know that she claims to possess the power of supernatural prayer, the power of elevating the souls of her children to direct communal or individual relations with the God Who is a Spirit—why, then, I'm sorry to confess to seeming rudeness, but really, all I can do is to shrug my shoulders, and let the matter drop, no matter how irritating it may sometimes be. For such critics are like people who at the rendering of a symphony of Beethoven should spend their time, and annoy their neighbors, by whispering comments about the surly or silly manners of the conductor, or the way the first French horn blows his nose instead of his instrument—and all the time they would be ignoring the music, to say nothing about the meaning of the music. Of course, as a good Catholic I should pray for such unfortunate folk: but when you are not a good Catholic—

Well, in that case, you write, when you should be praying; and even in the chapel of Gethsemani Abbey I am afraid that if I did not literally write, I was too often storing up memories for writing.

And though it cannot be done as it should be done, and certainly not by me, I must do my best, to fulfil my promise, to say what I am able to say about that battlefield of prayer.

I shall say, at present, nothing about the Mass: the supreme prayer. It is too sacred a subject for these rambling notes. Nor shall I try to write about the liturgical exercises at Gethsemani: neither learnedly, for I don't possess the learning, nor impressionistically. Just now, my sole concern is to express as well as I can my thoughts about the Force which all these white-robed men of twenty different nations were possessed by, and which collectively they possessed—no doubt in greatly varying degrees of completeness and power—as they chanted the age-old psalms, and sang the entrancing hymns, and uttered the energizing words of the dialogs and solos of prayer composed for her Divine Office by the Church herself.

I find, as so often before, that I may best approach the central thought in my mind by quoting from another, and a better, writer; in this case, William Augustine Cram, the father of Ralph Adams Cram, who writes so inspiringly about that father in the March number of the one really living creative monthly magazine in America today, the *American Review*. Speaking to his son, whose writings had been rejected by some periodical of the time, the elder Cram said:

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> Console yourself with this thought, for I am sure it is the truth. If Emerson, for example, had lived all his life on a desert island, and not a word of his had ever been printed and published to the world, his influence on humanity would have been just as great, provided he had thought his great thoughts, for it is not the material expression that counts, but the antecedent spiritual energy that brought these thoughts into existence. They are the reality, and whether they are good or evil, it is they that determine life.

Even more powerful than great thoughts, is prayer: the prayer of evil, but especially the prayer of good. The spiritual energy of prayer is the primary power used by humanity. Now, the Trappists, the Carmelites, the Jesuits, the men and women of the other orders and congregations, and many of the bishops and priests of the diocesan clergy, are experts in this spiritual power of prayer. (And no doubt there are men and women not of the visible fold of the Faith who also are led by God along this path of the power of prayer. But I am writing now of the experts, the great initiates, of the Church.) They give their all—their lives, their human passions, prejudices, pride, desires, sacrifices and sufferings—as the price, all too small, for the Pearl of Prayer. This Pearl it is that is dissolved in the alembic of the liturgy, day by day, night by night, year by year, age after age, and returned in essence to its Creator. This is the force that determines life. Prayer may be perverted—but of that calamity, who may speak adequately? Prayer, however, always is preserved from any deep or general corruption, within the Church; for the great promise stands: that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.

This was the prayer I watched at Gethsemani, a name of uttermost meaning when prayer is thought about. I watched, and wondered, even if I could not participate: from the time when the bell would summon those soldiers to the arena, till again it would end, for a time, the mighty struggle. . . .

A bell is ringing now. It is that of my parish church. I go forth, most of these notes set down, in the rose and grey dawn. I ask my parish priest to remember the Abbot of Gethsemani in the Memento for the Dead; I serve his Mass, and ring the bell which all around the world, minute by minute, announces the sacring of the Mass, thinking as I do so: "Rest in Peace."

P.S. And now there comes a letter from Kentucky, from a nun in another of the several power houses of prayer which with Gethsemani Abbey make that valley about Bardstown a sort of American Holy Land, telling me that just as the Gethsemani monks gathered to elect their new abbot, a plague more virulent than influenza or bronchial pneumonia invaded that battlefield of prayer. There are six monks already dead and laid beside the late Abbot; and a score more are struggling for their lives. In the midst of the affliction a representative of the Mother House in Europe arrived to confirm the election of Abbot Dunne (who himself is dangerously ill). Told that the abbey was quarantined, he nevertheless insisted on entering, and he is there now, aiding the nursing brothers from St. Alexis Hospital, Chicago, who volunteered to help the stricken soldiers of prayer.

The graveyard at Gethsemani is spreading fast. . . . Among the bodies of the monks lie the bones of a woman, who sixty years ago worked like Martha and prayed like Mary for the pioneers who built the abbey. She asked, as her sole reward, that she be laid to rest among them. Abbot Obrecht never wholly approved of that episode. He complained that visitors to the abbey were distracted from the attention they ought to have given to the work of the monks by their curiosity to see the grave of the woman. Eve's daughters, apparently, still are able to distract the sons of Adam, even when they are in their graves.

But, *O felix culpa!* If it was a fault, it was a charming one. I think that the spirit of that charitable, hospitable Kentucky lady of the long ago must still be ministering to the spirits of the new arrivals in that cloistered cemetery. What may we do—we worldings for whom these warriors of prayer lived their sacrificial lives, and for whom they died? Well, I suppose we may *try* to pray now for them: certainly, in any case, there is the Mass that may be offered up for their repose, and for their peace.

The Land Rock

No more interpreting the sea and land
The rock stands by the shore, repelling
The angry waters swelling
The invading deeps upon the listless sand.

The rock gave back a voice that was its own
As spokesman of the land, not echoes merely:
It told the breakers clearly
Whence they had come and why in tone for tone.

But now the rock is gone. And no more breaks
Upon its granite strength the waters falling;
The thin tides over the sands are crawling,
And make no sound save what their creeping makes.

The sea is backwash now, and can explore
The land where once the rock's dominion
Lured near the eagle's pinion;
Now slushing sea-drift voices at will the shore.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS.

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THE CRISIS IN THE COMMON LIFE

By SUMMERFIELD BALDWIN

IT IS a pity that we have no word to cover all the varied manifestations of the human impulse to a common life. If neologism were not so reprehensible, one would be tempted to coin from the Greek some such term as "coenonics," and restrict adjectives like "political" and "social" to particular forms of community. Especially good reasons can be urged against the continued promiscuous use of words derived from *polis,* in other than their vulgar connotations. While we attempt to render *polis* "city-state," the *polis,* in reality, was neither of these. An ideally limited population inhabiting an ideally limited area was a *polis,* and those ideal limits would hardly exceed the limits of a modern Middle Western township. State, on the other hand, near kin to estate or domain, was a point of force, a right of lordship, real and invisible, unlimited as to population and area, capable of increase to vast empires and of diminution to the vanishing point, as in the case of an exiled dynasty.

The indiscriminate use of "politics" to describe both classical *polis* and European state has been partly responsible for the very widespread supposition that the latter somehow derived from the former. It would be just as reasonable to suppose that the classical *polis* "evolved" from Egyptian, Babylonian or Jewish forms of common life. We should be gainers if the art of state could hereafter be regularly called statecraft, and if, for its science, we translated German *Staatswissenschaft* into some such word as statelore. The historically minded could then restrict politics to the phenomena of the *polis,* and ignore its vulgar use to cover the machinations of those who have or who seek government offices.

But the need for some such inclusive term as "coenonics" is made yet more evident if we recall that both classical *polis* and European state, like all things human, were transient forms. They came into being, and they passed away. But the common life, in some form, preexisted their births, and survived their deaths. In the course of the eighth century B. C., for example, the *polis* gradually replaced, in many parts of the Greek world, the priestly and tribal way of common life which is adumbrated for us in the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." The Homeric heroes knew the *polis* only as a citadel, not at all as a community. Hence to attempt to discuss "political conditions" in pre-Homeric Greece is to obscure the fact that politics, strictly speaking, did not then exist.

More misleading is the practise of some writers to remark, in effect, that in the Middle Ages the Church was the State, to refer to the "great Church-State over which the medieval Popes presided," or to discuss the "political thought" of Pope Gregory VII. The fact is that from the ninth century to the close of the thirteenth, the Catholic Church in western Europe had the special task on its hands not merely of supplying the means of saving grace (its unvarying function) but of providing the peoples of those lands with a way of common life in this world as well. From the standpoint of strictly human history, the Catholic Church need not even have been Christian to have fulfilled this rôle, since it was strictly analogous to the rôle played by the priests of the Olympian gods in pre-Homeric Greece. But since it was Christian, the baptism it administered not only performed its spiritual work of remitting original sin but was also regarded as the *sine qua non* of the right to enjoy the benefits of the common life. This, of course, is why Jews were regarded as aliens, infidels as public enemies, and heretics as traitors.

But all this does not make the Church a state, nor its mind and activity "political." The great medieval Popes were adepts not in Statecraft but in "Churchcraft." The thought of canonists and theologians which bore on contemporary problems of the common life had better be called ecclesiastical than political thought. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, the European State evolved from the Church in a fashion analogous to that of the emergence of the Greek *polis* from the preceding priestly community. The so-called struggle of Church and State in the Middle Ages was, in reality, nothing but a series of rebellions by kings and barons, the temporal agents for the enforcement of "Churchcraft," against the Pope, the Lord of Christendom. The very core of the concept of state, the doctrine of domain, was first clearly set forth by Aegidius Romanus, a churchman justifying "Churchcraft," so true is it that the State developed from the Church, in the latter's special rôle as a form of the common life.

The *polis,* like all human forms, in due time passed from being. Already, when Plato was writing his "Republic," he seems to have believed that the *polis* was hopelessly corrupt, its end near at hand. Plato and Aristotle were not, as they are often presented, the first, but the last of political thinkers, if we use the words strictly. Aristotle, himself, was the tutor of Macedonian Alexander, who found a practical solvent for political form, and inaugurated the age of empires which cul-

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minated in the universal lordship of Rome. Yet neither Alexander nor Rome could have supplanted politics by mere force of arms and intrigue. Both Plato and Aristotle, in isolated passages, reveal the beginnings, before Alexander, of the evolution from the *polis* of still a third way of common life, in which fellowship in the *polis* was to be thought too narrow a foundation of the community. Man's humanity was to be the sole necessary passport to the enjoyment of communal rights, and woe to any lesser form which tried to exclude him from them.

Clearly it would be improper to call the common life of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman ages political. Since humanity, in a sense, is made to supplant the *polis,* we might name it "humanitarian"; since human "society" was the chief object of theoretical concern, we might name it "societal," or even "social." But since, from the practical standpoint, the inclusiveness of the ideal of common life rendered it so dilute and useless that common life itself was in process of gradual extinction, and of replacement by ruthless, or, if you please, rugged individualism; since the man, not the citizen, was what mattered, the best name for the thought of these times is, perhaps, "anthropic," or even philanthropic. Such philanthropical ideals ate steadily into all idealism of the common life, until, in the days of the early Roman empire, they began to eat into its ultimate cell, the family. Thus, ironically, the more men thought themselves to belong to the community of humanity, the less they enjoyed the benefits of the common way of life. So far as classical antiquity is concerned, the history of the common life really ends in the days of Tiberius and Nero.

As a name for something, however, the *polis,* and the *res publica* endure all through the philanthropical period, but not as a name for the community seeking the highest good, about which Aristotle had written. The Hellenistic and Roman empires used the *polis* and the *municipium* as formulas for governing peoples long habituated to these forms of common life. In short, while most men were seeking the satisfactions of that life in a large and correspondingly vague "society," the office-holding caste kept alive a government which men continued to call political. But the relations of the government to the unpolitical community had become habitual rather than moral, legalistic rather than customary.

As the atomic *polis* was, for a time, the ideal way of common life among the Greeks, so the monadic State became the ideal way of Europe after 1300. Statecraft everywhere replaced Churchcraft, even within the Catholic hierarchy. The first fruits of the State were the Babylonian Captivity of the Popes at Avignon and the ensuing Schism. For its own spiritual security, the Papacy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was obliged to transform the vague Patrimony of Saint Peter, in central Italy, and the presidency of the Roman commune into the States of the Church. This was the special task of such Popes as Alexander VI and Julius II. Its difficulty, no less than that of combining the office of supreme pastor with that of state sovereign, justifies the contemporary tendency to absolve these Popes from their historic disrepute.

But as the *polis,* in turn, evolved, or degenerated into the philanthropic mood of the Hellenistic and Roman ages, so, in its time, the State also decayed and died. What we call "State" today resembles very little the State of the sixteenth century, its greatest epoch. Then it was taken for granted that a subject's religion was to be determined by state law. Today the State has grown too weak to touch men's consciences, and is everywhere supposed to be at its best when it meddles not at all in religious questions. In the sixteenth century, the State regulated, in the minutest detail, the business affairs of its members. Individual enrichment apart from correlative State enrichment was not far removed from treason. Today, the State must shape its policy only with a view to the enrichment of individuals. Thus the modern State is to concern itself neither with business, the means of life, nor with religion, the means of the good life.

The State as a way of common life has been dead for a long time. Napoleon may, perhaps, be considered its funeral director, but from 1587 when first royal blood, that of Mary, Queen of Scots, was shed under the forms of law, down to 1793, when Louis XVI died beneath the knife of the guillotine, it was in continual decay. For more than a century, State has meant either government or nation. Government, on the one hand, has, at least since the days of Walpole, been thought of not as an abstraction, but as that group of the governing class who happen to be in power. What happened to the *polis* of classical antiquity has befallen the State. Its ghost is government, and government is the office-holding class.

Neither is the nation of the last hundred years a state. The State was an intellectual form, primarily concerned, perhaps, with the enforcement of a common land law. The emergence of statecraft from Churchcraft was repeatedly marked by jurisdictional and juridical struggles between church courts and king's courts, between canon lawyers and civil lawyers. But lawyers were the priests of the State as judges were its pontiffs. Jurisprudence supplanted theology as the queen among the sciences. The nation of our times is rather an emotional impulse than an intellectual form. Common race, common language, common traditions, induce a patriotic thrill which is all too shrewdly exploited by men who see in economic nationalism a way of self-enrichment. The crude

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tribalism which prevails in contemporary Germany merely carries to absurdity what is implicit in all national creeds. It is hard to imagine Herr Hitler out of his frock coat and into the skins of a Teutonic chieftain; yet even Presidents of the United States have thought it amusing to don the costume of Indian sachems.

The middle years of the seventeenth century witnessed the crisis of the State's malady. The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 dissolved the painfully built Constitution of the Holy Roman Empire, and cleared the way for the rise of spurious German nationalism under the egis of Prussia and the Hohenzollerns. In France, despite its technical victory, the constitutionalist Fronde was outwitted by Mazarin, and within a generation Louis XIV could act as if he had actually uttered the insolence: "The State! I am it." In England, in 1649, Charles I and the English Constitution expired simultaneously in the bloody event on the scaffold, and an Oliver Cromwell could inspire the peculiar kind of English patriotism which has deluged the whole world with Englishmen's blood.

These years also witnessed the foundation of a new school of thought about the way of common life, which, with unbelievable ineptitude, is taught to the young by college professors under the doubly misleading name of political theory. Far from dealing with the *polis,* these latter-day thinkers did not even deal with the State. There are differences between the apostles of modern "coenonics," but Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Rousseau had this in common, that one and all grounded the community with which they concerned themselves upon a contract, by which men agreed to raise themselves from the state of nature. But if state ever meant anything, it meant status. Its law attempted, not without success, to attach a mere man to the land, to make the land the measure of fixed and inescapable human obligations. *Noblesse oblige,* noble or baronial land tenure imposes an obligation, is the most succinct way in which this point of view has achieved expression. The notion of contract is radically opposed to the notion of status, for contract requires a prior freedom from obligation. Hence to speak of a "contract theory of the States" is to be guilty of a contradition in terms.

Not one of these men was a lawyer. Hobbes and Spinoza, in different ways, brought to the problem of the common life the mind of the mathematical physicist. Locke and Rousseau, again in different ways, brought the mind of the psychological physician. Their first and superficial aim is not to expound the nature of the State but to justify the existence of government in the teeth of a gratuitous assumption of absolute human liberty. More fundamental, however, is their constructive aim to find a way of common life which can replace the dying State. In the light of their real or supposed discovery of such a way, they proceed to apologize for government, Hobbes on grounds of utility, Spinoza on grounds of practicability, Locke on grounds of property, and Rousseau on grounds of liberty.

We may call the way of common life which they proposed "humanitarian," or "sociological," or "philanthropic." It was all of these, but it was not either politics or statecraft. The new social order evolved from the State very much as the State had evolved from the Church. As a churchman gave the State its perfected concept of domain, so the statesman, Jean Bodin, presented the sociologist, Thomas Hobbes, with the perfected concept of sovereignty. But in the hands of the new theorists, sovereignty was to be not an organ of state, but an agency of society, entrusted to government, by which the social order was to live and grow through the enactment of proper legislation, and its vigorous enforcement.

The radical malady of our times is the bankruptcy of all four of these social doctrines. Each had tended to beget its own contradiction. The techniques of Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Rousseau have been used to refute effectively the first social certainties which these men were believed to have found. Uncertainty is now, as it was in the days of Tiberius and Nero, pandemic. The State died long ago; its ghost is still with us in a government, and a caste of office-holders, "politicians." Society, the social order, in its turn, is moribund. The decay of the basic cell of common life, marriage, is the last symptom. The wraith of society will no doubt remain with us, as a caste of professional pundits, experts, Brain Trusters, or what you please to call them. The history of the common life in our western world appears to be drawing to its close.

At a similar juncture in the affairs of classical antiquity, two phenomena made their appearance: Caesar and the Gospel. As a chasuble in a museum resembles a chasuble worn by the celebrant of Mass, so Caesar resembled the Gospel. Both were conservative, but Caesar conserved classical antiquity by putting it into a museum, while the Gospel conserved it by merging its man-found certainties with the God-given certainty of the Christian mind and the Christian life. Today, Caesar again looms ominously. What "he" will look like is not, perhaps, the problem of our times. That "his" task will be conservative as an embalmer's task is conservative may be safely predicted. But the Gospel has once more its other kind of conservative mission, and we may well inquire somewhat more fully into the manner in which its deathless truth of Christian communion will transmit to the generations unborn all that is certain in the thought of the four great schools of the social order which now lies dying.

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"NEW AUSTRIA" ONCE AND NOW

By FRIEDRICH VON MINKUS

"BROTHERS in faith and language, the young human race was to spread over the earth. But they revolted against God and in presumptuous defiance built the Tower of Babel. 'Then the Lord confounded their language so that they might not understand one another's speech.' A vague longing for unity still glowed in the soul of man. In world-conquerors it burst into flame. Fanned by Babylonian passion for glory, not by God-serving humility, it sank into ashes.

"The Son of Man created the world-embracing kingdom of His Church, redemption from the curse of Babylon: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel,' the gospel of the universal language, the love of God and one's neighbor."

These thoughts I have found noted among some of my old papers. I had written them in Old Austria at Whitsuntide in the year 1914 as the introduction of a speech to be given at the first meeting of a newly founded association, called "New Austria, League for National Peace in Austria," which had just been created by a dozen men, belonging to the ten nations of Austria. These men loved the great international Catholic mission of Austria just as much as they loved their own special nationality. The heir of the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, inspired by the plan of reorganizing the Hapsburg monarchy on a federal basis, turned his attention to "New Austria." The list of members grew from day to day and included also the name of an almost unknown priest, Dr. Ignaz Seipel, professor of moral theology.

The above speech was never made. The summons to the meeting was silenced by a pistol shot in Serajevo, the bullet striking the heart of Franz Ferdinand.

World War. All the nations of Austria are assembled in my trench. Two hundred men—ten nations! Confusion of Babel? Oh, no! Rather a wonderful illustration of *Viribus Unitis*, the device in Austria's coat of arms: each man, by his special capacities, completes the other. Is there any national litigation? Never! (In the trenches there is no fight for seats in Parliament!) And the language problem? Identical thoughts teach foreign words so easily: "Have they already plowed, sown, harvested, our people at home?" "If only mother gets well again!" "God keep wife and children!" And we officers have a smattering of each language. And above all, there is the Sacrament on the altar of our cavern; kneeling before it, we all understand each other.

We are like a real Catholic family, we ten Austrian nations in the same trench, one in our troubles, one in our hopes. . . . I am writing home on a post-card: "We don't want New Austria—we have got it already. . . ." This post-card was addressed to Dr. Ignaz Seipel.

New Austria? National peace? . . . In the four years' war the four Apocalyptic riders have trampled half Europe under their hoofs. Where is Austria? My way home leads through newly formed states. . . . In a room simple like the cell of a monk I am sitting opposite the last Imperial Minister for Social Welfare, Reverend Ignaz Seipel. In our talk the history of Austria passes before us like a film.

The Roman Empire is split into West and East, between Rome and Byzantium. There where in the ancient *caput mundi* Nero has raged against the Cross, Christ's Governor is residing. Nations flood and ebb in Europe. In the Danube area Germans, Slavs, Magyars — Christians, heathens—are blocked. In the West the most powerful king reigns over *Gallia* and Germany and dreams about a new Christian *Romanum imperium*. The dream fades away. "Not as the world giveth," said Christ of the peace He left behind Him. The division of Charlemagne's realm creates an enmity of a thousand years to come: France and Germany's strife for the Rhine.

The German king, Otho the Great, realizes the dream of Christian imperialism, but as the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. "My kingdom is not of this world": A thousand years' fight begins in Europe between Germans and Neo-Latins for the borders of the Alps. However, the German fantastic *imperium* of Christian universality achieves a great deed of civilization: it brings peace to the heart of Europe, to this conglomerate of nations in the Danube area. Austria—*Ostariki*—the eastern frontier mark, bulwark against the heathen robbers and the Halfmoon, becomes the guardian of Christian culture.

Rudolf von Hapsburg, modest landlord in Switzerland, as the German princes after twenty years' electoral strife place the imperial crown on his brow, reaches for the crucifix instead of the scepter. Far-seeing, he appoints Austria's orphan ducal crown to his heirs.

"Others may wage war, thou, happy Austria, marry!" The Hapsburgs, bearers also of the

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electoral crown of the Holy Roman Empire, join Styria, Bohemia, Hungary, Croatia, one after the other, to the small German Austria; half Europe is theirs and further dominions in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands. Far over the ocean reaches the scepter of the "house of Austria" into the New World: "Upon my empire the sun does not set." Charles V's giant empire dissolves as quickly as chance has joined it together, but the organic unity of the Danube realm remains. Microcosmically the dream ideal of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation has become alive in its former *Ostmark*.

The religious war waging between the Protestant North and the Catholic South has irretrievably divided the empire. But Catholic Austria, bleeding from the wounds of this thirty years' war, saves Europe from the last assault of the Islam. There is, however, a newly founded second empire, half-barbaric—Russia, successor of Byzantium in the schism of religion, which strives for the sea possessed by the Turks and for the Balkans, a future chief battlefield of Europe.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Austrian spirit is in full bloom. Out of liveliest activity there grows, simultaneously German and international, Austria's baroque culture. It is more earnest than the Italian, gayer than the Spanish. It has more freedom than the French baroque and more elegance than that of the Netherlands and of North Germany. South German fine feeling amalgamates the richness in melody of Austria itself with the Neo-Latin impulsiveness, Slav dreaminess and Hungarian fire. Thus Austria's world-conquering music is born. The classic tradition of Italian universities combined with the ancient Arabian erudition of Spain founds Austria's famous medical school. The generous patronage of the House of Hapsburg develops Austria's distinguished taste, the glamor of its theatres. And representative of this harmoniously blended culture is the Austrian himself.

The world realm of the House of Austria has opened cosmopolitan horizons to the cultured Austrian. Constant intercourse with the non-German countries of the Hapsburg realm accustom him to foreign spirit. He neither imitates it, nor does he overlook its advantages. He is mentally too adult to find pleasure in childish self-admiration. He does not sacrifice a scrap of his German soul, but he puts it on a higher pedestal. His gay southern blood makes it easier for him to assimilate than for the heavier-built North German. Raw edges are smoothed, power is refined to agility. He places tact higher than the desire to impress; pompous phrases, plebeian swagger, awake his ready sense of humor and are repellent to his fine feelings. Pride in his German culture has changed into a sense of duty to transmit such inheritance to younger nations. Thus he becomes a joyous mediator between the peoples. This cultural "Love thy brethren" again and again draws force from deep Catholicism. Austrian Catholicism has ripened out of the mysticism of the Middle Ages and the heat of religious wars into a broadmindedness of sunny optimism and into a complete understanding of the *kat'holu* spirit of the real Holy Empire.

Prussia rises against Austria's predominance in Germany. This is the battle between Protestant rationalism and Catholic idealism. . . . Finally Napoleon's military imperialism forcibly divides the last remnants of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

In 1804, the last Roman-German emperor centralizes the heretofore loosely joined ten nations of the Hapsburg countries into the severer form of an empire under the name of its inmost German cell: Austria. The small estates of the ancient Roman-German Empire, in their strife for great power, also join the "German Confederation." Austria with its German parts is the leader. With the victory of Koeniggraetz, however, Bismarck expels Austria from the German Confederation and, after the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine, the King of Prussia becomes Emperor of the "Second German Empire."

In the international Austria the newly awakened national spirit strives for decentralization. The united empire changes into the dualistic Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Under the pressure of the lost hegemony in Germany, this dualism is dictated by need, urged upon Austria by the Hungarian nationalism which is fed by Prussian sympathy. A fatal half-measure! Hungary becomes a Magyar national state, in spite of the difference between its nationalities. Austria, on the other hand, becomes a state composed of different nations, each of which has the same right to preserve its own nationality and language. This divergence, nourished in the Parliaments, results in heretofore unknown hatred and quarrels among the ten nations. The nationalities in Hungary demand the same position as those in Austria possess and in Austria they clamor for the rights of Hungary. Fostered by tribe-related nations abroad, Irredentist movements awaken. The emperor's hands, however, are tied by his oath to the Constitution. . . .

"If Austria did not exist, it should be created" —these are the words of Bismarck, who eyed with great suspicion the explosive quality of small states that would spring up in Middle Europe were Austria dissolved. He is not avid either of annexing the German part of Austria: "An amalgamation could never occur; Vienna cannot be ruled from Berlin." He refers the monarchy to its given territory of action, the Balkans. Thus the alliance between the Prusso-German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is constituted.

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But near the Balkans there is Russia. Germany is a rival of England in naval power. France bewails the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. The clouds of the World War are darkening. The pistol shot of an Irredentist gives the signal: the bullet kills the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, who wished to strengthen the monarchy by a free federation of its nations.

When the end comes, it finds the world in ruins. Old Austria has crumbled.

We are sitting silent in the falling dusk in Ignaz Seipel's quiet chamber. I remember the last sentences of the speech which I had written at Whitsuntide four years ago, intended for the first session of *Austria Nova:* "They call Austria Babel! Whitsun of the nations she shall be by the force of the creative word: Love. 'Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of them that believe in Thee and light in them the fire of Thy love!' And each of the Austrian nations will say to the other: 'Behold, companions in Austria, I am like you destined to exchange our abilities, our knowledge, the teaching of our histories, the achievements of our cultures! Thus, better than on battlefields and on green tables, in our nursery-garden of understanding and love, will reblossom —with God's help—the flower of human brotherhood!"

I well know that this Whitsuntide vision has vanished. The nursery-garden is torn to pieces; those who could have fostered it, now each labor on their own soil. Two powers fight over Austria, which has become small again, like the old *Ostariki:* Marxism and Nationalism. Is there really no other way for Austria than to become the western wall of Bolshevism or an insignificant part of Germany? In these times of human misery, shall the treasure of Catholic knowledge, hoarded in Austria through a thousand years of searching and also of failing, but never of wavering, be dissipated in the experiments of the doctrine of despisal of God or buried in the narrow egocentricity of nationalism? Cannot Austria become a modest helper to the old Continent and transmute national quarrels to the commandment: "Love thy brethren"?

Out of such pondering I demand from Seipel, "Do you believe in Austria's future?" From the street the newspaper boys' shouts shrill through the windows: "The Red Flag!" "Annexation to Germany!" Seipel's glance is unseen in the falling darkness. Then he speaks. They are the words of a prophet: "I believe in Austria's imperishable task of arising out of a peacefully happy Europe."

Three years later Ignaz Seipel was Austria's first great Catholic Chancellor, and pace-maker for Engelbert Dollfuss. Now they lie in a common crypt, blessing New Austria's future. R. I. P.

Communications

THE WORLD COURT

Boston, Mass.

TO the Editor: Anent the "World Court" (why does this misnomer persist?) and the dismay of THE COMMONWEAL (February 15) at the "unpredictability of Senate action," will you graciously grant a bit of your space to an old man with some remaining memory, in order that he may express *his* dismay at your linking of the encyclicals to the question of United States entry into the Permanent Court of International Justice, a name which appears to be a good enough label if its content lived up to the name.

With a son killed in the World War and a brother who died from the effect of a wound received in the Civil War, perhaps I may be presumed to love my country and also to love peace—to love peace even to the extent of constant prayer and a will to work for it. But I reserve my right and my freedom to question and discuss whether this World Court, or the League of Nations, or the Versailles Treaty are not one and all instrumentalities for domination by an "International Limited" and not, either in fact or in original intention, instrumentalities of peace.

Encyclicals are universal. The defect of internationalism is its lack of universality. The first act of the League was to exclude from "a league for peace" every nation which had kept the peace. Alliances are, and of their nature are meant to be, exclusive as well as inclusive, and for every *pro* there is an *anti.* Generally the *anti* expresses its purpose, while the *pro* is but the temporary means.

Our Holy Father, Pius XI, is reported to have said in an allocution: "Men write peace in their treaties; they fail to write peace in their hearts."

Any high court, in order to function, must possess: first, the law; second, jurisdiction; third, the facts; fourth, sanctions. Have you any idea that your World Court would accept for its law the encyclicals, than which it could have no surer guide for peace? Do you not know that universal acceptance of universal moral law is the plain road to peace, but also that it is the road they will not take because it means the readmission of God and His law to the councils of the nations? The Prince of Peace, He Who was not invited to Versailles, nor enshrined in the League, nor honored in its Court, will nevertheless give us His Peace when we are ready to pay His price, which is obedience to *the* law. Might not Catholic Action leaven the mass of what we call public opinion. Whose public opinion is it? Are we not of the public? Of whom shall we be afraid?

Catholic Action, as defined by the Papal Delegate, means action under the initiative or endorsement of one's bishop. I speak under correction when I say that the Holy Father and our bishops have urged Catholic Action for peace, but that specific approval of this League or this World Court has yet to be promulgated.

CHRISTOPHER I. FITZGERALD.

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Boston, Mass.

TO the Editor: How many inert, dumb patriots realize that the defeat of the World Court issue came because of two things: the constitutional requirement for two-thirds vote which made a minority defeat the will of the majority, and secondly, because fanatical eloquence, misunderstanding and perversion of facts resulted in 40,000 telegrams and letters being sent to senators.

The result is far-reaching and will seriously hinder America's influence abroad. Flandin and Laval waited until they heard the result before going to confer with the British on the peace of Europe. The matter must now be taken up in serious earnest, though no reverse action by the Senate can come this year. A grave crisis in our international relations has been created by letting Europe feel we have shut the door on all cooperation and are increasing our dangerous spirit of narrow nationalism. This was serious enough before the vote, but is doubly so now. What is needed is letters and telegrams to the President immediately urging the importance of his continuing cooperation in the Disarmament Conference and to congressmen to oppose the excessive army and navy appropriations and the cut in the State Department's budget. The latter is inexcusable. Remember it was letters and telegrams that defeated the majority.

Efforts should be immediately begun to urge an amendment to the Constitution to prevent thirty-three men defeating the will of the majority of the Senate and the will of the majority of the great bar and church and educational and labor organizations besides that of many millions of women in national organizations urging our entrance. The wrong done is far-reaching and the fact is ignored that we *need never send a case to the World Court and that we can withdraw from it "at any time."* Entrance in itself is a small matter involving only paying a trifling quota for support of the Court. The whole importance is psychological, affecting Europe and ourselves.

Those who do not know the names of their congressmen have only to telephone their State House.

LUCIA AMES MEAD.

O. F. M.

St. Louis, Mo.

TO the Editor: May I call your attention to a typographical error in your announcement of the December selection of the Spiritual Book Associates? Unless noted, this might tend to encourage the laxity of lesser journals in distinguishing between the Servite (O.S.M.) and Franciscan (O.F.M.) designations, which last should rightfully have been given to Father Agostino Gemelli.

The announcement of a dependable English version by Dr. Hughes of "Il Franciscanesimo" will be heartily welcomed by the increasing number of students and writers in the field of Franciscana. They may now be referred to a mighty mind in his own right and an authoritative guide in interpreting the spirit of Saint Francis in its modern implications.

REV. F. MAXIMUS POPPY, O.F.M.,
National Secretary.

THE LETTER-BOX

AGREEING with Mr. John A. Fitzgerald, Ella Frances Lynch writes from Minerva, N. Y., to the effect that there is "very little Latin in the average high-school head." This dearth, drought or whatever you will to call it is attributable, she thinks, to the fact that Latin ought to be taught at home and in the primary school before the child even begins the study of mathematics. Mr. D. B. Keely, concurring with our editorial on "Who Shall Control Our Money?", states that he believes "the money question and its control is the kernel to be cracked to solve rightfully our man-made depression." Since one pun is allowed every day during Lent, we should like to add that too many of the Kernels who "solve" this problem are, unfortunately, themselves cracked. Mr. F. Reynolds, of Des Moines, Iowa, writes on the subject of the League of Nations: "I once or twice saw a mischievous boy, when his mother's dog attacked a strange cur coming about the house, and the mother called to him to control the home dog, call out loudly, 'Be quiet, Towser,' adding in a subdued tone, so that the mother could not hear, 'Pss . . . catch him!' Is not this attitude very like that of our United States? We condemn war in sounding phrases, but supply cheerfully and without stint all the weapons, ammunition and warlike supplies the belligerent nations ask for." Clare Singer Dawes, of Winchester, Mass., points out a recent COMMONWEAL typographical error, in which Pope Alexander IV was made to usurp the rightful place of Pope Alexander VI. The Reverend Maximus Poppy, O. F. M., writes to append to Dr. James J. Walsh's tribute to Sir Bertram Windle the observation that Sir Bertram was a faithful tertiary of St. Francis, and that his own request his body was laid out in the "habit which he had worn faithfully for forty-five years." Mr. Edmund A. Stephan, writing from New York on "twenty-four-hour Christianity," says that to young men, likewise himself, the inoperativeness of "man-made laws" is apparent. No authority can ultimately oblige people to be moral and decent about wealth unless they want to be moral and decent. Accordingly the mission of Christianity has once more been given the center of the stage. Mr. Stephan writes: "If Christianity cannot make its gospel heard at a Board of Directors meeting, where there is ample opportunity for defying God's laws, just as audibly as it can from a pulpit, it is a fiasco for me. But I believe that it can. I believe that its philosophy is so powerful that it can make a saint of a harlot and an angel out of a tramp. And I most sincerely believe that it, and it alone, can make a nation amenable to government. But I am as firmly convinced that if in getting and spending we lay waste our powers, it is the province of Christianity to conserve those powers, and that until those who preach its gospel become more conscious of its influence in every niche of life, the plan of its Founder will not have been realized." Well, it would seem that if the pulpit can't do much with the Board of Directors, this in turn is seemingly unable to do much to the pulpit.

THE EDITORS.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—The Most Reverend Joseph Francis Rummel, Bishop of Omaha since 1928 and Assistant Episcopal Chairman of the Department of Lay Organizations of the National Catholic Welfare Conference since 1930, has been named Archbishop of New Orleans to succeed the late Archbishop Shaw. At the same time it was announced that the Right Reverend Monsignor William R. Griffin of Chicago had been appointed Titular Bishop of Lidda and Auxiliary to the Most Reverend Alexander J. Gavick, Bishop of Lacrosse, Wisconsin. * * * During the month of March the Holy Father has asked for special prayers for the Armenians and the Assyrians. The Council of the League of Nations is studying French and British proposals for a settlement for Assyrian refugees from Irak, which became an independent Moslem State in 1932. * * * Mother Thérèse de Jésus, Superior General of the Auxiliatrices of Charity, has made her perpetual vows before Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris. The forty young women of this new Congregation will work among the poorest homes of the industrial centers just outside Paris. During the day they will visit the sick and the needy; at night they will resume the life of the cloister with its many hours of prayer and the recitation of the Office. * * * The Sisters of Service of Toronto, Canada, have been conducting a Catechetical Correspondence Course for 11,000 children in the sparsely settled areas of Western Canada. The soup kitchen of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal served 500,000 meals to the needy in 1934; the Sisters serve 1,150 homeless and unemployed men each day. * * * The Catholic Workmen's Association of Western Germany reports that 54.6 percent of Germany's Catholics above fourteen years of age belong to the working class, 18.4 percent are independent farmers, business and professional men, 5.8 percent are public service officials and 10.5 percent are clerical employees.

The Nation.—Bombardments from the right and left and indeterminate places by the oratorical big-shots of the country, continued to give the atmosphere all the sound effects of warfare. Whether there were any mass movements of the people behind these barrages and what direction, if any, they were taking, was highly speculative. The fireside patriots who wrangle over the strategies of politics and economics now as the sofa sages did over military maneuvers during the war, were at least highly entertained and the common language was enriched by a colorful and alliterative epithetical style. * * * The air was so full of contentiousness that any clear indication of what was happening at the congressional investigation of the NRA was lost in the confusion. The strategy of the administration in the face of the angry charges of Senator Borah and his fellow inquisitors, seemed to be that of a Japanese wrestler: to yield to, rather than oppose, the attacker so that to his surprise he throws himself flat on his face. Mr. Donald R. Richberg, executive director of the National Emergency Council, proposed scrapping all NRA codes except those applying to "trades and industries actually engaged in interstate commerce or affecting it substantially." In view of the recent Houde case decision and others, reported in these columns last week, a narrow rather than a broad interpretation of the industries which so engage, seemed implicit. * * * The House voted 3 to 1 to expunge the "pink slip" nuisance law requiring indiscriminate income tax publicity. * * * Mr. Evelyn John St. Loe Strachey, English Communist, was arrested after delivering a lecture in the synagogue of the North Shore Congregation Israel, Chicago, and charged by immigration officials with urging the violent overthrow of the American government and entering the country by means of false statements. * * * Debate on the $4,800,000,000 relief bill continued. Senator Copeland advocated cutting the total practically in half and limiting relief almost wholly to direct relief rather than work relief. He also demanded provisions for "white collar" aid. * * * The Treasury announced that it would reduce the national debt by $675,000,000 and concentrate the issue of all currency in the Treasury and Federal Reserve System, removing from circulation all national bank notes. The first move would be effected by using the government's profit from the gold devaluation of the dollar to retire consols and Panama Canal loan bonds. This will effect an annual saving of $13,500,000 in interest. As consols and Panama bonds were virtually the only basis for issuing national bank notes, the country's note currency will be automatically limited to United States notes, Treasury silver certificates and Federal Reserve notes. A forestalling of inflation was seen in the move and commodity prices fell sharply.

The Wide World.—Conflicting reports about the revolution in Greece filled the newspapers, but on March 12 it was announced that a smashing government victory had been won in Macedonia. Refugee officers from the rebel army were interned in Bulgaria. That Crete could remain an independent republic for any length of time was thought impossible. American residents in the strife-torn areas were safe, according to Minister L. MacVeagh. * * * On Sunday, March 10, pastors belonging to the Lutheran Confessional Synod read from their pulpits a scathing denunciation of the Nazi government's religious policy. Large crowds attended the services, excepting in regions where National-Socialist troopers interfered and prevented reading of the document. The pastor of the historic Kreuzkriche in Stettin was arrested. * * * Premier Flandin announced that his government would favor a policy of cheap credit and would seek to lower the rate of interest. One financial

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objective must be, he said, to establish a price for money sufficiently low to prevent the influx of foreign capital. * * * The accidental death of Herr Schemm, Nazi minister of culture in Bavaria, capped—as it were—the climax of a recent campaign to undermine the confessional school. Schemm opened that campaign in 1933, with addresses which were for the most part not allowed to appear in print. This spring so much progress had been made that a propaganda attack could be launched against parents, both Lutheran and Catholic, with a view to inducing them to send their children to non-confessional schools. In Munich children of the city orphanage were taken out of confessional institutions, though the orphanage itself is in the care of Sisters.

* * * *

Cuban Chaos.—There are in Cuba seventeen distinct, recognized politico-economic groups Left of the government, besides a certain number to the Right. On March 11 a general political strike was called and on the same day the Mendieta government declared the existence of a state of war; declared that death would be meted out for terrorism, firing on authorities, and sabotage of light, power, water and food distribution; and decreed the dissolution of trade unions joining the strike. The general strike was the outcome of a cumulative growth, initiated by the university students who received their first support from teachers. The strike steering committee is evidently still controlled by the University Strike Committee in cooperation with the United Front of Public Employees. The ordinary labor unions are not officially connected with the leaders of the movement. The steering committee says: "The movement is not a communistic, but a national-socialistic, movement. . . . We are not against a determined man but a determined system. . . . Our principal demands are withdrawal of military forces from civil affairs and reestablishment of civil authority guaranteed by tribunals of justice." President Mendieta says the revolutionary strike is staged by a minority who know they would get nowhere in any election. On March 12 it was believed the strike had been broken. Colonel Batista with his 13,000 soldiers, 3,000 marines and 3,000 national police was reported to have clamped down the severest measures in Cuba's violent history. In two days 25 of his men were killed or injured. In four days 200 persons were reported to have been found dead.

Archbishop Hanna Retires.—From San Francisco comes the news that the Most Reverend Edward J. Hanna has been compelled by serious ill health to resign his see as well as to cease being Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. This news will be a source of deep regret to millions, who must find it difficult to realize that Archbishop Hanna has reached a goodly old age. Born in Rochester, New York, in 1860, he was one of the most brilliant ecclesiastical students of his time, and studied in Rome, Cambridge and Munich. Later on he made his mark as a teacher. Since his elevation to a bishopric, His Grace has been almost constantly in the public eye as an exponent of wise toleration and industrial peace. In California virtually no social program got under way that did not have his personal assistance and the value of his enthusiasm. Protestant leaders everywhere have appreciated his courtesy and tact; Catholic endeavor of all kinds has been grateful for his benediction and help. Last year he was one of the Committee appointed by President Roosevelt to settle the problems underlying the serious maritime strike in San Francisco. But this is by no means an obituary. It is rather a kind of modest bouquet offered Archbishop Hanna, in the hope that it will cheer his sick room and help him to a speedy and thorough recovery.

Progress of the Movies.—Average weekly attendance in American motion picture theatres rose to 70,000,000 last year, an increase of 10,000,000 over 1932 and 1933. Encouraging as this must be to the producers, it is still below the 1930 attendance record of 110,000,000 customers every week. The motion picture industry completed the year "substantially in the black, compared with a loss the year before," according to the 1935 "Daily Film Book" which has just appeared. The effect of the motion picture on sales of editions of the classics was brought to the attention of the recent New York conference of the National Board of Review by Dr. William Lewin, chairman of the motion picture appreciation committee of the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Lewin estimated that sales of editions of "David Copperfield" had tripled since the release of the Dickens film and predicted 500,000 copies would be sold between now and Christmas. Dr. Lewin also told the conference that the campaign of the Legion of Decency was well timed, since producers were more friendly to the idea of high-grade films today than they were two years ago. At Cincinnati the Episcopal Committee on Motion Pictures has just issued a statement that it has been "gratified to receive reports from many sections of the country of a marked improvement in the moral character of the films released since July, 1934." The committee "gratefully acknowledges the splendid support that the Legion of Decency has received from many sources, including the general press of the country. . . . The Episcopal Committee urges the continued and united support not only of all Catholics, but also of the unnumbered thousands not of the Catholic faith who have joined in concerted action against the menace of the immoral cinema. This is necessary, that the ground gained may not be lost."

The Academy's Excellent Show.—The 110th annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design has opened at the American Fine Arts Building in New York and will be on view without charge until April 9. The exhibition is a distinguished one for several reasons. It is the Academy's first under its new president, Jonas Lie. Either through his efforts or through the natural percolating of some strong realities of modern life and art methods into the sheltered lives of the Academicians, the present show is much the most interesting of recent years.

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The usual Academy works are still there in goodly number. For all the voluble protests against them by the panting revolutionaries of art straining to be a few seconds ahead of the present, the standard Academic paintings are remarkably competent. For all they may lack of soul or frenzy or innovation, they do preserve a norm of technical ability. Besides these standard works there are several pictures by the extravagantly modern: for instance, among others, a Peter Blume picture of cubes, street vistas and a workman carrying a suit of armor on a pole. Blume is best remembered for his "South of Scranton," prize-winner at the last Carnegie show. The most definitely pleasing pictures in their fine, fresh balance of realism, modernism and artistic competence are the two principal prize-winners, one an admirably realized and compact picture of a youthful mixed-foursome sitting by a tennis court, and the other an enchanting landscape of Cape Ann with figures. The strong, uncompromising light of American landscapes comes into its own in this work. The figures are beautiful and real, real, real (that is, not sentimental), and the composition is subtly and satisfyingly right. There are besides some of the splenetic social commentaries on modern life which have become as much automatic and tiresome "machines" as the old-style academic things. The place of honor in the galleries is deservedly occupied by the "Madonna of the Squirrel" by Harry W. Watrous, an outstanding example of mature understanding and masterly competence.

Englishmen and Peace.—Complete returns from 29 out of 597 constituencies on a ballot that is now circulating in England give a clear indication of the national sentiment on the League of Nations, disarmament and the general question of war and peace. The *Catholic Herald* reports that despite the incompleteness of the returns over 1,500,000 persons have sent in their ballots. The National Declaration Peace Ballot contains five questions. To the first, "Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?" 1,475,669 or 97 percent voted "Yes," 45,645 or 3 percent voted "No." Those "in favor of an all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement" numbered 1,401,659 or 93.2 percent, those opposed 102,868 or 6.8 percent. "The all-round abolition of national, military and naval aircraft by international agreement," was favored by 1,289,655 and opposed by 196,754. That "the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement," was voted for by 1,392,686 persons, and 90,354 or 6.1 percent voted against this proposition. The view that "if one nation insists upon attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by economic and non-military measures," was held by 1,298,734 or 94.4 percent, and opposed by 77,363 or 5.6 percent. Finally, 828,064 votes were cast in favor of military measures, "if necessary," against a nation that attacks another nation, and 332,314 voted against such measures.

Youthful Enthusiasm.—Cisca (Chicago Students' Catholic Action) is a remarkable organization of young people in the more than fifty Catholic high schools and colleges of the city. It meets regularly, either by committees or in general assembly; its program is extensive as well as intelligently correlated. We understand that the fervor of many a young orator is first tried and tempered in these surroundings. The work of Cisca follows a "four-ply plan," which subordinates special activities (e.g., disseminating periodical literature) under the heads of religious activity, apostolic endeavor, literature and social action. It was primarily the brain child of the late Reverend Joseph Reiner, S.J., whose tireless energies left their mark on Catholic life in Cincinnati and Chicago particularly, before his untimely death. A little booklet, "Crusaders in Catholic Action," has been devoted to his memory by the members of Cisca. The story of progress is related in some detail, but doubtless the pamphlet is chiefly interesting by reason of the light it throws on the personality of Father Reiner. He has the extraordinary gift of being as enthusiastic about young people as these are about other matters. Nothing apparently could tire him, provided it had an apostolic core; and in almost countless ways he aided the growth of new ideas as well as the preservation of old ones. Cisca, now headed by His Excellency, Bishop J. Sheil, reflects its founder.

Mexico's Gangster Government.—The murders, terrorism and arbitrary actions of officials counter to the laws of the land, practised by the Mexican government are reaching such outrageous proportions that the American secular press is at last beginning to express a few mild sentiments of disapproval and look for further news than the government publicity "hand-outs" in Mexico City. A student and a workingman were killed instantly at Guadalajara and several unarmed students and workers wounded by the firing of the police on a procession protesting against the government's dictatorship in education and the government's encouragement of the thuggery of the Red Shirts. Three of the wounded subsequently died. The students of the university have been on strike for some time as their only peaceful means of affirming their desire for academic freedom. The seizure of Archbishop Diaz by armed police without a warrant for his arrest, was a graphic instance of the government's attempted terrorism and breaking of the laws of the land. The Archbishop was taken from his own car, and in the car of the police "taken for a ride" in gangster style. On a dark and deserted road he was held for four hours for no apparent reason and at the whim of the armed men. He was then taken to a police station and forced to pass the night sitting in a chair. He was finally released at four in the afternoon of the following day. Another instance of gangsterism by the government, was the entry of twelve armed government agents into the home of an elderly woman and their carrying off of a painting attributed to Murillo and a sculpture of Christ by Cabrera. This is contrary to the constitutional provision that no one in his person, his domicile or possessions shall be molested except by an order in writing of a competent authority setting forth the legal ground for the action taken. Every newspaper in Mexico City except the government mouthpiece, *El Nacional,* has begun to dare to protest.

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Monsignor Peter Guilday.—Dr. Peter Guilday, professor of church history at the Catholic University of America, was solemnly invested as a Domestic Prelate, with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor at a solemn High Mass, March 7, in the crypt of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at Washington, D. C. The investiture coincided with the Catholic University's annual observance of the feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Dominican Doctor of the Church and patron of Catholic schools. The Most Reverend James H. Ryan, rector of the university, officiated at the investiture, and the Right Reverend Monsignor Patrick J. McCormick, a member of the faculty, read the Papal Brief, which stated that this honor had been requested of the Holy Father by His Eminence Cardinal Dougherty to whose archdiocese Monsignor Guilday belongs. It was also announced to Monsignor Guilday that the honor was conferred "in recognition of your scientific attainments shown in the works on history which you have published and which have won on all sides, the highest appreciation of your productive scholarship." The Right Reverend Monsignor George P. Johnson, of Portland, Maine, preached the sermon and expressed the gratitude of the Catholic University for the honors conferred upon it by the Holy Father. Monsignor Guilday was instrumental in the founding of the American Catholic Historical Association and as secretary has been serving as its guiding spirit. He is the author of "The Catholic Church in Virginia," "An Introduction to Church History" and "The Life and Times of John England."

Knights of Columbus Mobilize.—On March 17 the Knights of Columbus were prepared to launch their most intense drive since the war period. This drive "to revitalize the 2,500 units," which will last through the summer, has two main objects: to arouse present members to more earnest religious, educational and welfare service; and to increase the membership by a minimum of 50,000. The United States and Canada have been laid out into twenty-six campaign areas under special administrative groups, and in every state and Canadian province a committee has been set up to further the drive. His Eminence Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli wrote the organizers congratulating them that they "address [themselves] with increased personnel and adequate resources to the practical solution of those problems of social and civil life which put to such severe tests the souls of Catholics today." Numerous other endorsements by Catholics and non-Catholics were received in anticipation of the campaign. The Red Cross, the Community Chests and similar organizations spoke of invaluable cooperation. Police Commissioner Valentine of New York praised especially the boys' guidance work undertaken by the Knights. The success of organizational efforts has made the leaders of the campaign confident that the hoped for results are assured.

* * * *

Holding Companies.—On February 6 the Rayburn-Wheeler bill, providing drastic regulation of the interstate power business and the eventual abolition of ordinary utility holding companies, was introduced to Congress. Between then and March 12 it was side-tracked. Also in that time the market value of utility securities declined $100,000,000 (the market in general went down), the American Federation of Utility Investors became extremely active, about 500,000 letters were sent into Congress protesting against the proposed law, and protesting telegrams increased until on the single day of March 10 a Senator not particularly identified with the issue received 6,000 wires. On March 12 the controversy was thrust before the country again: Samuel Insull was acquitted on state embezzlement charges, which acquittal is expected to relieve him of further prosecution; the City of Chattanooga voted $8,000,000 to build a city distributing system for power to be bought from T.V.A. against the bitter protests of business interests and especially of the Tennessee Electric Power Company; the President delivered a forceful message on holding companies. This message was packed with arguments against the "private empires within the nation which the holding company device has proved capable of creating," and was the most forceful presidential utterance since Congress got out of control. The basis of the arguments is found in the last two paragraphs: "It is time to make an effort to reverse that process of the concentration of power which has made most American citizens helplessly dependent for their daily bread upon the favor of a very few. . . . I am against private Socialism of concentrated private power as thoroughly as I am against governmental Socialism . . . destruction of private Socialism is essential to avoid governmental Socialism."

Catholic International Relations.—The Council for International Relations is the British group of the Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales, whose American member society is the Catholic Association for International Peace. The English organization's annual report, issued recently in its regular publication, the *Catholic Survey*, tells of its work during the past year. The C.C.I.R. is ten years old. Numerous Catholic societies, such as the Catholic Truth Society, the Federation of University Catholic Societies and the Knights of St. Columba are "constituent societies" and have representatives on the executive council. Individuals also belong. The C.C.I.R. integrates and transforms into action the interests of these organizations and people along the lines of international relations and the liaison between English Catholics and those of other countries. An active club has been founded under the auspices of the council; a course of forty lectures on "International Ethics" and numerous other lectures and conferences have been held; monthly luncheons have brought together Catholics to think about international questions. A group has watched the work of the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization and Geneva, and the Council cooperated in the International Congress "Defense of Peace" held in Belgium, and sent delegates to Fribourg to the P.C.I. meeting called to study the problems of racialism and nationalism. Its office is used as an information bureau on Catholic and international matters.

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The Play

By GRENVILLE VERNON

De Luxe

FOR THE second time within a week has Louis Bromfield appealed to the suffrages of the New York theatre-going public—this time not in an adaptation by him of a French play, but in an original play founded on one of his stories. Had an unknown writer's name been affixed to either of these plays it is doubtful whether either would ever have got past the manuscript stage, for in neither of them does Mr. Bromfield or do his collaborators show either mastery or even comprehension of the necessities of the theatre. It isn't that "De Luxe," the latter of these two works, is not without its poignant moments, or that the dialog or characterization is poor, though certainly neither dialog nor characterization is brilliant. It is simply that the authors, whether Mr. Bromfield or John Gearon or both, fail to realize that talk for the sake of talk, with its corollary, repetition, are fatal in the acted drama. Also they show small understanding of the fact that though in life people may come and go at will, in the theatre entrances and exits must be prepared for, and that continual dialogs become wearisome.

Mr. Bromfield has proved himself a novelist of some attainment. "The Green Bay Tree" at least is a work to be taken seriously, but it is improbable that the theatre is his métier. Like so many novelists he is apparently unwilling to submit himself to the rigorous discipline necessary in writing for the stage: to economy of word and phrase, to insistence that every speech and every part of a speech have direct bearing on the story and the action. The art of the novel is much more flexible in its demands than the drama. A play must be over in two hours, and the audience never skips scenes as the reading public skips pages. The dramatist must hold the interest of his audience every minute—if he doesn't he is lost. As a dramatist Mr. Bromfield is only too often a bore.

"De Luxe" is entitled "A Play about the End of an Epoch." It is laid in Paris of today and has to do with the meanderings and maunderings of a precious set of expatriates. Its two chief characters are a sublimated gigolo and a woman of no morals, the loss of which was caused apparently by the death of someone called Jimmy in the war. As the war had ended seventeen years before, Sabine Brandon was certainly faithful to her Jimmy—in her fashion. We have seen these people before in Hemingway and in a dozen paler followers—these people of "the Lost Generation," whose souls were killed by the war, or so their creators assure us. But frankly they have always given me the impression of people whose souls were atrophied at birth, not anything so interesting as tragic figures of the war—in short, weak brothers and sisters formed for literary purposes. "The Lost Generation" is and always was a good deal of a pose, the pose of weaklings trying to feel superior. And so not only is the technique of "De Luxe" inadequate, but the subject-matter is unimportant. Of course an interesting play might be written about these people, but it must be by a moralist or at least an ironist. Mr. Bromfield tries to make them important in themselves—and fails.

The cast and the settings are, however, admirable. Mr. Bromfield seems to have a faculty of getting the best in actors and actresses. Melvin Douglas is in particular exceptionally fine as the sublimated gigolo, giving distinction and pathos to a rôle which might very well have been unpleasant in the extreme. Other excellent performances are given by Cora Witherspoon, Claudia Morgan, Violet Heming, Ann Andrews and Elsa Maxwell. (At the Booth Theatre.)

Petticoat Fever

"PETTICOAT FEVER" is quite modestly denominated on the program as a "farce," and a farce it is—though of rather genteel quality. It is amusing in its lines and situations, even though for a short time in the second act it does wear a little thin, and it is played with such skill and gusto that it has won well-earned success. The story has to do with an Englishman stationed in a lonely radio station in Labrador. To the station comes a Canadian knight and his fiancée. The knight is a good deal of a silly ass, and the Englishman and the girl fall in love with one another. There is, too, the Englishman's fiancée, who arrives after two years' absence, and with her arrive the complications. A play of mostly innocent merriment. Dennis King is starred, and gives a bouncing, vital performance of the radio operator, but I myself thought first honors went to Leo Carroll for his heavy dragoon sort of Canadian knight. Mr. Carroll is one of the most accomplished comedians in the theatre, and a comedian who wins his effects by extraordinary economy of means. In Doris Dalton, who played the girl, Richard Aldrich and Alfred de Liagre, who present the play, have discovered a young actress of beauty and distinction, an actress who ought to become well known to metropolitan audiences. And Goo Chong, the only known Eskimo actor, is not only an Eskimo but a real actor. Mr. de Liagre directed the play and directed it excellently. (At the Ritz Theatre.)

The Barretts of Wimpole Street

KATHERINE CORNELL has revived Rudolf Besier's interesting play about the Brownings for a limited engagement. The cast is largely as it was at the original New York performance. Miss Cornell plays Elizabeth Barrett; Brian Aherne, Robert Browning; Charles Waldron, Edward Barrett; Margalo Gillmore. Henrietta. Moroni Olsen has replaced George Riddell as Dr. Chambers, and gives a sincere performance. Miss Cornell's impersonation is as radiant as ever, and Mr. Aherne's as vital. Despite the unpleasant scene between father and daughter in the last act, "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" is one of the most justly popular plays of recent years. It has poetry, tenderness, dignity. It is the sort of play which on the whole the English-speaking may well be proud of keeping in its regular repertory. (At the Martin Beck Theatre.)

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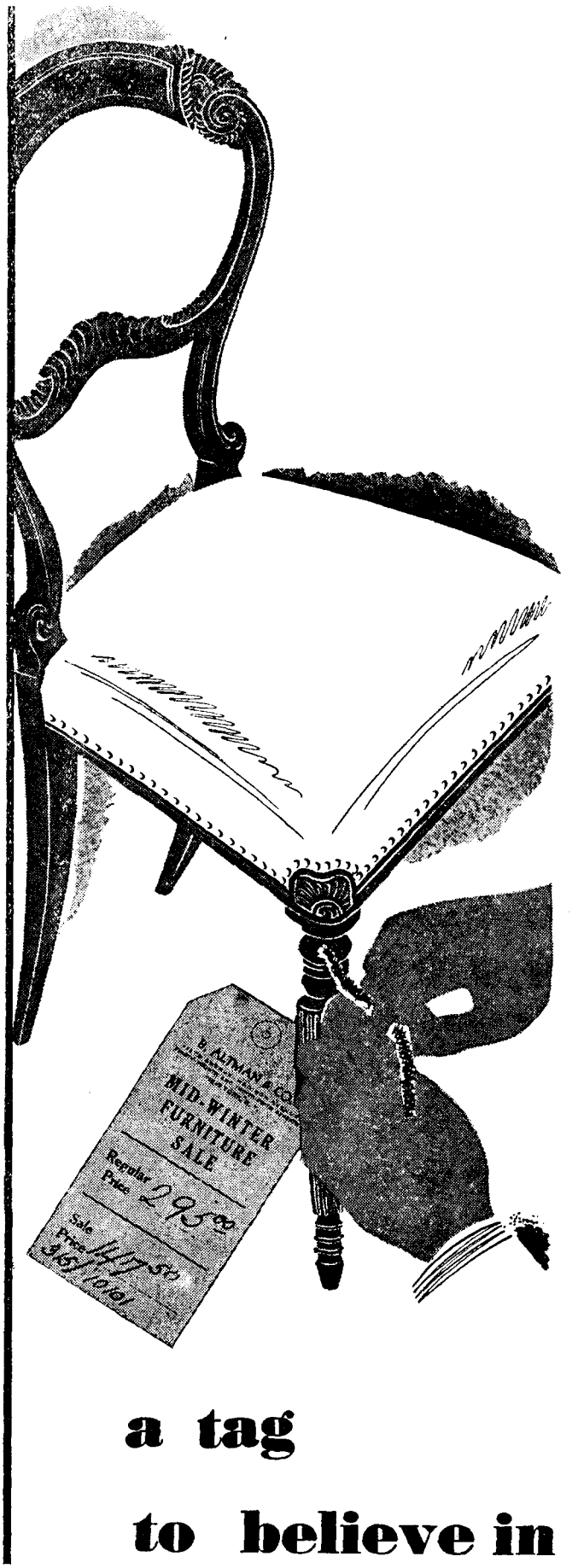
Books

Religious Publications

MONSIGNOR FULTON J. SHEEN in a characteristic foreword calls this book "The Making of the Pulpit Orator," by Reverend John A. McClorey, S.J. (Macmillan. $2.00), "without doubt the finest treatise on pulpit oratory in the English language." This truly excellent book reviews the remote preparation for preaching and notes the proper relationship between studies and oratory. Regrettably, it contains very little about sermon composition and sermon types. Of memorizing the author says, "Practically speaking, the best way is to think out a speech, compose it carefully on paper and memorize it word for word." He argues that "sloth is ordinarily at the bottom of the various arguments urged against the memorizing of sermons." And he identifies extemporaneous with impromptu. However, of half a hundred homiletic works known to this reviewer all dispute Father McClorey's recommendation of verbatim memory and some support his definition of extempore speech. Many preachers from several lands contribute sermons for the Sundays and festivals of the year to "The Message of the Gospels" (Joseph F. Wagner. $3.00). These reprints from the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* can vitalize that occasional all-preached-out feeling. A more or less detailed synopsis precedes each sermon. Curiously, the language and thought of the synopsis do not always reappear in the several captions that break each sermon's text. Popular disinterest in sermons, says the late Monsignor Chidwick in his foreword to "Living for God," by Reverend John S. Middleton (P. J. Kenedy and Sons. $2.00), is the fault of the preacher and the sermon. These sermon notes adopted by the New York archidiocese for 1935 are all genuine persuasions to moral activity on practical, spiritual and infrequently heard topics. They preach the Divine Teacher and His ways of prayer, penance and love. Thus the sermons are topical rather than textual and the day's pericope more often suggests than elaborates the main thought. The hard saying on birth control (page 155) might have incorporated some delicate reference to the safe period. To print sermons doubtless produces better than average sermon matter but it risks mere verbal repetition of another's words. Added synopses might stimulate a more personal and therefore more vital expression of the preacher's own thoughts.

That unwearied Scripture scholar, Father Hugh Pope, has edited for lay folk principally an explanatory edition of the New Testament "The Layman's New Testament." Left-hand pages carry Bishop Challoner's revision in 1749 of the Rheims text of 1582. Right-hand pages offer copious notes. The margins indicate parallel passages and give the topics of the paragraphs into which the text is divided (Sheed and Ward. $1.50). "The New Testament and Divorce," by Cardinal MacRory (Burns, Oates and Washbourne. 3/6), reprints three articles from the *Irish Theological Quarterly* of a generation ago. The author's unusual reading of the Matthaean



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NEXT WEEK

BUILDING FOR CITIZENSHIP, by Harold Fields, executive director of the National League for American Citizenship, considers from the basis of personal experience the strange problem of what used to be called glibly "Americanization" now that there is so much questioning and counter-claiming as to what an American may or may not be. "The aggressive attacks by Communists and other subversive political movements demand a radical change in our attitude toward civics and citizenship today," Mr. Fields begins his article. "What was good, what was sound yesterday, no longer stands the test of fitness. . . . Our problem today is that of building faith. It is at faith that the subversive elements are launching their attacks. They realize that our strongest bulwark is that faith; if we lose that, we lose the keystone to the arch of our democracy. With that shattered, the whole structure falls. . . . It is our schools that must develop that faith by effecting a true understanding of the functions and purposes of our political bodies." . . . NOTE TO A PICTURE, by Gouverneur Paulding, is a brilliant description of the present relations of the Church with the colored races. "The nations of the world had made them slaves," he writes, "and now made them soldiers: the Church made them priests. . . . America's problem was one of assimilation. Europe was fatally committed to the profit-rendering colonial system." In the struggle of contending human greeds and prides, Mr. Paulding sees one hope of peace and justice. . . . A PLAN FOR MEXICO, by Paul V. Murray, outlines a specific procedure to aid the Mexican people to free themselves from the tyrannical misrule of the present government cabal. . . . SAINT BIRGITTA, by Selma Lagerlöf, Sweden's great contemporary writer, is a noble and memorable narrative. The translation is by Naboth Hedin, translator of Miss Lagerlöf's book, "Harvest," which will be published some time in April.

text quite demolishes the Protestant interpretation that allows divorce and remarriage for adultery. Reverend W. H. Russell of the Catholic University finds in "The Bible and Character" (Dolphin Press. $1.50) that the character values necessary for teachers in Catholic high schools are developed by reading the New Testament. "Ready Answers in Canon Law," by Reverend P. J. Lydon, is a practical summary of the Code for the parish clergy. Disciplinary laws, dogmatic, moral and liturgical topics of particular pertinence, are treated. References to the Code and to the recent decisions of the Holy See point the way to more special knowledge (Benziger Brothers. $4.00).

Reverend Ludwig Ruland's "Pastoral Medicine," put into smooth English by Reverend T. A. Roller and edited by the late Arthur Preuss (B. Herder Book Company. $3.00), offers an intelligent background to the wise solution of pastoral questions and has useful information about personal matters that affect the priests' physical well-being and spiritual ministrations.

Chaplain Raymond C. Knox tries to coordinate religion with education and with life in "Religion and the American Dean" (Columbia University Press. $1.75), but the religion advocated is a vague humanitarianism that dreams in the idiom of the NRA of "a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest state of which they are innately capable." Dreams are beyond the realm of criticism but Christ's injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God puts first things first. Despite its parade of learning, "The Practise of Public Prayer" (Columbia University Press. $2.50) is a useless and irritating book. Dean Miller of Bucknell University examines the adequacy of Jewish and Christian prayer forms. Half the book contrasts confession with psychoanalysis to the disadvantage of the former. Reference to but two unimportant Catholic sources in a bibliography of over one hundred may help explain the constant misunderstanding of the spiritual principles of Catholicism; e.g.: "the Catholic Church thus insists on a theological interpretation of sin, a standardized conscience and a routine ritual, which is more systematic than critical" (page 161); "the mystery of divine forgiveness . . . led to the practise of magical and ecclesiastical forgiveness"; "their magical formula is 'ego te absolvo'" (page 173); "an elaborate system of magical penance" (page 174). E. Boyd Barrett is quoted as saying (page 162) that proof that confession "does not protect Catholics from nervous trouble lies in the undeniable fact that Catholics to the same extent suffer from neuroses." Nor does baptism, he might as safely have added, protect a man from disease and death. The chapters contributed to "Dominican Spirituality" (Bruce Publishing Company. $1.25) by five Belgian and French Dominicans and translated by Father Townsend will appeal to all concerned with the ways of God in man's soul.

Father Hugh Blunt's "Give This Man Place" (Sign Press. $1.50) reveals the man is Saint Joseph and his place is ever growing in private and official Catholic worship. Each chapter selects a facet of his character and

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closes with graceful verse. "Bishop John England" (Edward O. Toole, N. Y.) was Bishop of Charleston, 1822-1844, and one of America's ablest apostles and greatest churchmen. This worthy biography by Reverend Joseph J. O'Brien has a foreword by Dr. Guilday, himself an authority on the subject. Eighty-one houses of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Namur staffed entirely by American Sisters are the abundant fruit of their third Mother General's vow to save souls in America. The story of the Mother and of the first American foundation in 1842 is well told in "Mère Ignace Goethals" by a member of the same congregation (B. Herder. $1.25). "Rose of China" is the edifying biography of a pious Chinese child who died a year ago in China at fourteen years of age after thirty months in the Church (Benziger Brothers. $1.50). "Kateri," better known as Catherine Tegakwitha, is Margaret Thornton's historical and interesting account of the life of the Mohawk Maid (B. Herder. $1.25).

"The Farther Shore," edited by Nathaniel Griffin and Lawrence Hunt, exhibits an interesting medley of some seventy opinions drawn from many ages, types of thinkers and kinds of philosophy and religion on man's state after death. The overwhelming opinion is that man's soul survives. Of the eight Catholic quotations only one, from Fénelon, is more recent than Dante (Houghton Mifflin. $3.00). "The Economic Mechanism of Scripture," by J. Taylor Peddie (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd. 10s), seems one of the wrong ways to mix religion and economics. It analyzes the monetary and economic mechanism of Scripture and its relation to the world crisis past and present. Greed is the witch but the Bible can no more teach economics than it can teach the way the heavens go. Page 82, where the text recalls that Nebuchadnezzar held the first recorded world's economic conference, and a footnote criticizes Roosevelt for inflation and devalued currency at the wage earners' expense, is typical of much of the book. "The Story of Christmas" (Macmillan. $3.00), by Dr. Campbell of Chichester Cathedral, is a reverent collection of stories and legends that cluster about the holy night. It concludes with a plea to forsake wars and follow Christ. Only a few of the quotations are from Catholic sources.

JOHN K. SHARP.

Exploring Nutmeg History

A Neglected Period of Connecticut's History, 1818-1850, *by Jarvis Means Morse. New Haven: Yale University Press.* $3.50.

CONNECTICUT is a small state, but it is a distinguished state in its beginnings, its conservative religious experiences, its constitutional development, its contributions to American business, its inventions, its insurance companies and its educational institutions. Few states are richer in men and traditions, and few states have contributed more of their sons and daughters to the settlement of the West. With Connecticut celebrating its tercentennial year, there should be more than ordinary interest in the snug little state which became a

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harmonious part of America about 1818 and which completely demonstrated its union with America at large in the recent election. Hence there should be enthusiastic readers of Dr. Morse's excellent and critical survey of Connecticut from the constitutional revolution of 1818 to 1850.

Despite the wide range of source material and the equally broad character of the factual information, Dr. Morse has presented a well-digested and logical study in which the reader is not lost in unessential details. The political situation, constitutional developments, legislative proceedings, conservative reactions after the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian victories, and the rise of Whiggery are carefully traced but not to the neglect of social and economic history. There are thought-provoking chapters on religion and education, on humanitarianism, and on the economic foundations of local society. This was the era when Connecticut was modernizing its school system under Barnard, establishing sectarian colleges, watching the rise of dissenters and the introduction of Catholicism, dreading the migration of its people from the farms to the industrial towns, noting the establishment of factories and shops, weeping over the plight of its agricultural interest in competition with fertile Western lands, and founding an aristocracy of bankers and industrialists as a substitute for the older order of preachers and patriots.

Puritanism in its objectionable sense was thrown overboard. A rather real toleration was instituted. At any rate, Irish laborers were welcomed by factory owners who also saw the advantage of giving a site for a Catholic church. In this connection, the author offers an explanation I have never seen elsewhere, yet one which is both plausible and documented: "It is also probable that the westward migration created a more favorable attitude toward the Catholics. Connecticut people who moved into the Mississippi Valley were thrown into contact with numbers of the sect, whom they found to be agreeable neighbors." The emigrants wrote letters to their Eastern relatives extolling the virtues of Catholics who lived, so the accounts ran, "as good and upright lives as any other denomination." These sentiments have a patronizing air about them, but they represented a significant concession to religious tolerance." Connecticut was changing even though it was not swept by revolutions and even though the conservative rural areas were dominant in the legislature under the faulty distribution of seats. Its habits remained steady, for the moral discipline of its people was not lost.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

George Brush

Heaven's My Destination, by Thornton Wilder. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

THORNTON WILDER has the Indian sign on a great many readers. I shall cheerfully admit being of their number—unable to determine what in this author is factitious and what genuine, or what is said by intent and what in the form of unpremeditated overtones. In

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short, one is never quite sure whether Mr. Wilder is endowed with the rare somnambulism of genius, or whether he has constructed his world in an out-of-the-way literary laboratory. At any rate, there are perilously few modern American novelists who give one a chance to doubt. For the most part they appear to be either clever women run amuck (like Dorothy Canfield Fisher), or not so clever men who lost too much in the stock market.

Of the present work, it may be said that George Brush seems destined to a place among the two dozen odd living characters in American fiction. He is so extraordinarily representative and symbolical that it is amazing no one ever thought of him before. The spirit which in the real Vachel Lindsay was raised to the heights of poetic inspiration, and which in many workaday mortals is tawdry prose, here informs a satire which is larger than its frame—which, as a matter of fact, continuously bursts that frame. The reader has an odd feeling that George Brush is too much for Mr. Wilder. In scenes like that at Camp Morgan, there are distressing traces of mere artifice—Dickensian passages in an author who cannot permit himself the luxury of being Dickensian. But again, as in the passages leading up to Brush's indescribable wedding there is so much genuine truth and creative magic that few novelists would not be proud of the achievement.

An American Don Quixote? Well, the book is a bit too obviously that. Brush's fanatical belief in an ultra-Calvinist God is infinitely better than his surroundings, but these last seem to triumph consistently. If Mr. Wilder is hard on the belief, he is still harder on the surroundings. What a bevy of ghastly women! The only one with any sense or decency, Jessie Mayhew, is as non-committal and self-contained as older readers used to think Ophelia was. The rest are a messy lot, indeed. Judge Corey's daughter, Mississippi, is just a shade more worthless than the girls in Mrs. Crofut's house; and poor Roberta, whom Brush thinks he ought to marry, is probably as bitter and judicious a portrait of a widely cultivated species of American female as anyone has drawn. By comparison the men are in utter disarray. Judge Carberry is muddled by his own clarity of mind, the interesting Burkin might be encountered in almost any smoking-car; but, woeful a lot as they are, they have in comparison with their women a definite reason for continuing to exist.

I cannot help thinking that Mr. Wilder has written a more significant novel than would at first sight appear to be the case. The entire court-room scene, which results from Brush's misunderstood desire to respect the ideals of Gandhi, is not unworthy of the elusive genius of Hawthorne or Melville. And in general there is a verity, not of observation merely but of interpretation, which suggests a good sardonic etching of this, the most godless of American ages. The reader may rightly expect to be discomfited rather than to be pleased. But if he is a mature reader, the acid will be good for his soul.

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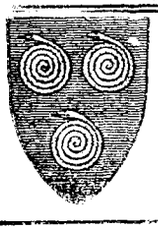
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Briefer Mention

Human Exploitation, by Norman Thomas, New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. $2.75.

"HUMAN EXPLOITATION" is a summary, with emphasis, of the conditions which make necessary the abolition of the capitalist system. The exploitation that Mr. Thomas writes about with strong passion would be, viewed in the vacuum of a test tube, aggregations of symptoms which a scientist could say signified any number of things. In this book they are identified with economic causes, and a share cropper is looked upon at once as a miserably poverty-stricken individual and a person who produces in such a way and gets his money in such a way and gets rid of his money in such a way. The author displays the unity of the economic and political aspects of American exploitation. He appears to recognize what the best Marxists do not, that, however cooperative your commonwealth, economics will still be political economy and that politics is not based on capitalistic exploitation but on nature. But in picturing the complex of the present order, the political element is not sufficiently clarified. To solve the impure problem of exploitation you cannot abolish the economic foundation and leave the political isolated in the vague airs of Mr. Thomas's "cooperative commonwealth."

Week-end, by Phil Stong. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

"WHILE this affection—yes, passion—had seemed secret and almost mystic, it had had a heroic, a self-immolating quality; it was the wolf bravely endured in her bosom." These words from the latest masterpiece by Mr. Stong are submitted in the belief that they may prepare the reader to meet people who sit "dazed by this conviction," who can also be "swept by an ineffable exultation" and who will occasionally direct upon him "a long, enigmatic smile." Ten or eleven such persons have come together at a house party in the country—it is indeed that old device! One man dies in an automobile wreck, and of the others, only one drives away from the house with the same woman he brought along. The chef and the maid are sufficiently impressed by the futility of all this to legalize their relationship. It reads as though it had been written expressly for the movies; which may explain why Mr. Stong is content to dispose of technical difficulties by covering them over with choice and airy phrases.

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